Position of Women in Society – A Study of Autobiographies of Women

Dr. RAJNI SHARMA, Associate Professor

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Dedicated to
My Husband Dr. Kailash Sharma

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Position of Women in Society

– A Study of Autobiographies of Women

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Chapter - I

Introduction

Autobiographies play a significant role in bringing out cultural criticism and social change; a change in which women find their individual identity and respect. This research work deals with the women autobiographical writings in different shades in twentieth century. Life story conventions of autobiographical writing such as diary extracts, letters, personal photography, essays, and other literary and artistic devices have to be considered to know and analyze that how woman writers hold a pen to build a different culture that is culture of resistance. The aim of this paper to bring to the attention of critics female writer's purpose, and potential, in offering a series of voices and experiences often lacking in the main stream literature.

The autobiography, the memoir, diary and letter writing constitute what is termed literature of self-revelation. The memoir is mainly concerned with the affair of a select number of people often in high society. The writing of Autobiography forms its existence in India from the early 19th century. In the initial stage, the Autobiographies of Kings and Queens were in Existence. Later on the political leaders started writing their Autobiographies. Women's autobiography writing, seldom taken seriously before the seventies, was not deemed appropriate for academic dissertation critics or literary canon. It was meant to be reprinted to diaries only. Earlier critics had restricted their focus to the lives of great masters of mankind.

In Indian English literature, very few Asian women writers have written their Autobiography in the pre and post-Independence era. Domna C. Stanton writes in The Female Autograph :-

"Female autobiographies, examples memoirs, letters and diaries – represent one of these cases of maddening neglect that have motivated feminist scholarship since 1978. This body of writing about the self has remained invisible, systematically ignorable."

In writing a women's life Carolyn G. Heilbrun says that a woman's life can be described in four ways:-

"... the women herself may tell it, in what she chooses to call an autobiography; she may tell it in what she chooses to call fiction; a biographer, woman or man, may write a biography, or the woman may write her own life in advance of living it, unconsciously and without realizing or naming the process."

Though Carolyn G. Heilbrun's questions have been raised with reference to western woman, they can be applied in the Asian context also. The basic difference between western women and the eastern counterpart is that of diversity in their socio-economic and cultural background. Domma Stanton in her article entitled "*Autogynography: Is the Subject Different?*" considers women's autobiography as *'autogynography'*. Critics like Germaine Bree or Shirley Neumann or Carolyn G. Heilbrun have debated over the formation of

women's autobiographies and checked the intensity of gender discrimination in it. There are several issues which have troubled the critics for a long time.

Generally, autobiography is a literary genre which unravels the innermost feelings of a writer. It provides self-exploration. But, can a woman, who is taught to be submissive and docile, achieve such a goal?. Susan Stanford Friedman has very remarkably put forth this problem of gender- discrimination even in creative writing:

"A... man has the luxury of forgetting his... sex. He can think of himself as an 'individual'. Women.... Reminded at every turn in the great cultural hall of mirrors of their sex... have no such luxury."

Asian women writers have established a permanent place in the arena of literature, because they have written with a woman's point of view. They have not initiated male manner of writing. Majority of Asian women autobiographies belong to the first category of autobiography described by Andre Maurois. They have expressed a genuine female experience.

All the autobiographies from Sunity Devee's The Autobiography of an Indian Princess (1921) to Mrinal Pandey's Daughter's Daughter (1993) and Taslima Nasreen's 'My Girlhood Days' and 'Wild Wind: My Stormy Youth' express the inner search of women from women's point of view.

In the later part of twentieth century, we find autobiographers like Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Shobhaa De, Dilip Tiwana, Sharanjeet Shan, Mrinal Pande, Banjeer Bhutto, Bangladeshi writer Tasleema Nasreen who are very blunt in the expression of their innermost feelings. They have boldly expressed the social inhibitions and cultural taboos laid down by the society. Their autobiographies have tone of truth and fidelity. The Social upheaval got expression not only in poetry and fiction but also in the autobiographies. The autobiographical genre got a new meaning and opened up new vistas of knowledge for all. Most of these autobiographies depict gender discrimination encountered by women. They are concerned for improving the sad condition of women in Asian society.

What numerous statistics and sociological studies on male violence against women strive to communicate is the pervasiveness and high frequency of this phenomenon that cuts across all categories of female victims and male abusers. At the heart of these researches lies the assumption that violence against women represents a strategic device employed by men within male-dominated social systems in order to maintain women's low position. As Francine Pickup remarks, "The violence to which women are subject is not random, or abnormal, or defined by specific circumstances alone. It is used as a weapon to punish women for stepping beyond the gendered boundaries set for them, and to instill in them the fear of even considering doing so. It is a systematic strategy to maintain women's subordination to men."

Seen thus as a widespread commonality rather than various isolated cases, the present issue implies the idea that female victims experience a twofold torment: the act of violence per se and the lack of legal and social norms that fail to sanction the abusive act, hence discouraging the victims to report the crime. Whereas sociological and psychological studies approach the issue of male violence against women from an objective perspective, their theories being supported by empirical evidence, literary texts engage in presenting the subjective aspect of the problem. Unlike scientific researches, which provide wide ranges of numbers and theoretical arguments, writers strive to particularize extensive series of ciphers and thus envision the story of only one case of gender-based violence at a time. In doing so, they intend to present the reader what figures cannot, namely the situational factors leading to the violent act, the abuser's gestures, the victim's reactions, her thoughts and feelings. Numbers cannot voice the devastating experience of having been abused, nor can they provide an image of the victims or the offenders. By contrast, literature enables one to express how 'a woman endures an invasion of self, the intrusion of inner space, a violation of her sexual and physical autonomy.

Autobiography became a platform to give voice to the woman's life issues, growing up female, coming to voice, affiliation and co-ordination. Crucially the writing and theorizing of women's lives has often occurred in their texts that emphasize and question of sovereignty and universality of solitary self. In women autobiographies student found models of heroic womanhood absent from their own education, who had actively challenged patriots, defied in resistant and being empowered writing their lives. Most of Asian women writers of the autobiographies belong to the outcry of genuine female experience, which expresses the inner search of the women with women's point of view. In writing a women's life Carolyn G. Heilbrun says:

"A world without evident power of control, women have been deprived of the narratives of text, plots for examples by which they might assume power over their own lives."

Violating the parameters of the canonical autobiography, they create testimonies of gender, caste, class and religion, and provide an alternative source of history. The works narrate the self-vis-à-vis family, society and politics bearing witness to gendered subordination. Primarily aimed at communicating the subordinated predicament, oppression, suppression and struggle for emancipation, these writings claim the agency, expecting the reader to respond and judge her predicament. Based on memory, experience and identity, women narrators reproduce the cultural modes of self-narrating, simultaneously critiquing the status quo.

The present study focuses on the autobiographies of Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Shobhaa De, Nayantara Sahgal, Gayatri Devi, Malala, Jhamak Ghimire and Tasleema Nasreen. These women writers have boldly expressed the social inhibitions and cultural taboos laid down by to society. The socio-cultural realities of the time have found an expression in the autobiographies of these women. All of them have faced gender, color as well as social discrimination in their childhood days, which has poignantly been expressed by all of them.

Amrita Pritam, the young poet who emotively invoked Waris Shah in what would become her best known poem, '*Ajj aakhaan Waris Shah nu*', was one of the foremost women writers in 20th century India. Pritam, who wrote in Punjabi and Hindi, was a bold and courageous woman who lived life on her own terms unlike the more subjugated women of her time. A prolific writer, she produced over 100 books including poetry collections, fictions, biographies and essays. Born in undivided India in 1919, she witnessed the horrors of the partition as a young woman, an experience that shook her to the core and shattered her soul. It was in the aftermath of the terrible experience that she expressed her anguish in the poem *'Ajj aakhaan Waris Shah nu*', reflecting the sense of hopelessness, terror and sadness that swept over everyone who had witnessed the partition. Her experiences during the partition also inspired her to write the novel 'Pinjar' in which she addressed the helplessness faced by the women of her time. Through her poignant writings she became a voice for women in Punjabi literature and the leading 20th-century poet of the Punjabi language. Her works have been translated into several Indian and foreign language.

She was born as Amrita Kaur on 31 August 1919, in Gujranwala, Punjab in undivided British India. She was the only child of Kartar Singh and Raj Bibi, a Sikh couple. Her father was a school teacher and a poet. She grew up in a spiritual environment and inherited her love for writing from her father.

Her family was very religious as her father was also a "pracharak"—a preacher of the Sikh religion. Her orthodox grandmother used separate sets of utensils to serve Hindus and Muslims. From a young age Amrita was a critical thinker and opposed such practices. Tragedy struck her family when her mother died when Amrita was just 11 years old. The little girl had prayed desperately to God to save her mother and stopped praying when her mother died in spite of her prayers.

She moved to Lahore with her father and found herself overburdened with household chores. She felt very sad and lonely and sought solace in writing. Her first anthology of poems 'Amrit Lehran' (Immortal Waves) was published in 1936 when she was 16 years old. She also got married around this time and changed her name to Amrita Pritam.

Amrita Pritam's autobiography the 'Revenue Stamp' is an account of her life built up with her memory. She has collected the scattered material of her life and conveyed a very novel vision of life. She questioned parental authority but accepted the restrictions laid down by her father. She is a victim of men's ego. In childhood she was terrorized by her father. He expected her to be obedient and self-efficient. He created environed restrictions on her. She identifies herself with phoenix, which rises each time it dies from its own ashes. Each time she closes a chapter or emotion, there is a burial. According to B.S. Goyal the autobiography of Amrita has :-

"Neither the salacious extroversion of Kamala Das' 'My Story' nor the intellectual exhibitionism of showmanship of Nirad Chowdhary's autobiography 'Autobiography of an unknown Indian'."

Amrita never mentions her first husband, which shows the bitterness for him. She made sacrifices in life to reach the present status. Even then she is pained at the attitude of the society for her which accuses her of being lusty like an aunt. The only affection in her life she got from her lover Imroz. She is deserted by Sahir and that pain she carries in her heart up to her grave. She was even determined to commit suicide. She confesses that her saddest verses belong to this period i.e. 1960. Her hunt for true love ended with Imroz with whom she passed her remaining life in a very modest financial condition.

Thus, Pritam's autobiography is an account of her life built up with her memory. She has collected the scattered material of her life and conveyed a very noval vision of femininity through 'The Revenue Stamp' which stamps at the dictates of male dominated society. The great critic George Gusdorf compares the autobiographer to a historian, who narrates his/her own history. He is the hero of his own tale and wants to unfold his past in order to draw out the structure of his being in time.

Shobhaa De is a well known name for the movement of liberality in Indian female writing. Born on 7 January 1948 she is a columnist and novelist. She has graduated from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai with a degree in psychology. After making her name as model, she began a career in journalism in 1970. During same time, she founded and edited three popular magazines- Stardust, Society, and Celebrity. At present, she is a freelance writer and columnist for several newspapers and magazines.

Shobhaa De's 'Selective Memory' is an outstanding autobiography of the time. It is a candid memoir of De ,talking about the women's rights and their societal status.

The issue here is just to see her autobiography with the perspective of women, and that too in India, where women are still not allowed to flourish and flower.

Written in a voice that is consistently confident and candid, *'Selective Memory - Stories from my Life'* is remarkable for the honesty with which it captures the essence of a fascinating woman, who has become a legend in her own time. Narrating the predicament of a woman writer Shobhaa De says:

'For a woman, a book in progress is like a secret lover she has to hide from her family and so people are terrified at the thought of writing about themselves. They find all kinds of excuses. They lie. They make up. They invent. They rub out.'

Through her novels and essays, she has tried to shatter patriarchal hegemony, by vociferously drawing attention to women's exploitation, discrimination and commoditization in the Indian ethos. She is as direct in her speech as she is in her works. She says,

"If the contents of my books have shocked India, well, they did. I don't want to explain, complain and certainly never apologize".

'Selective Memory' is a simply written account of a very eventful life. But when she was asked that, "Why did a writer who is known for her forthrightness choose to be 'selective' when it came to herself?" she responded,

"I don't have to tell everything. It is not obligatory for a writer to do the full monty in public." (Indian Express News Paper, Bombay Anu Kumar)

In the autobiography she writes poignantly of her early years and of her relationships with her parent's siblings, husband and children. Wherein she tells us of her birth, being a girl child, she had disappointed her mother and grand-mother because, her mother prayed for the second son, only her father was happy and declared her 'lucky' for the family. 'Selective Memory', makes the readers marvel at the contrast between the ethereal beauty on the book's cover and woman described within. An ordinary girl pitched into strange and often unpleasant celebritihood. She has always been ahead of her times, wrote candidly and scrupulously of her dislikes and painstakingly sketched some very interesting experiences. It's her observations of diverse people and issues that hold the book together.

She writes poignantly of her earlier years and of her relationship with her parents and siblings. She writes,

"Unfortunately for my mother I was not a second son she prayed for. My birth could not possibly have been a day of celebration for the family especially since my maternal grandmother was around to remind everybody that third daughter had arrived as an additional liability..."

Being at the top of journalism was not an easy thing for Shobhaa De. Often she was mocked at and faced scandalous stories, which was shocking for her :-*"Miffed by my opinion of 'Bandit Queen' he chose to retaliate with a childish abusive piece, whose main thrust was aimed at my husband's Mercedes. It was Shekhar's contention that a woman who guides through life in such a car cannot know about the ground realities.''*

Shobhaa De has a thoughtful message to convey to the women of her times. She is a treasure-house of experiences and in a philosophical Vein. She observes:

"I fear for my generation of women they really are like daughters, neither here nor there. They definitely don't want to be like their mothers and they definitely want to switch places with their daughters (what for, I ask you?) we talk of options, opportunities and choices – sure we have them. What do we do actually with these goodies? We earn, we travel, we splurge... and we weep."

Shobhaa De's writing talks about the women's rights and their societal status. The issue here is just to see her autobiography with the perspective of women, and that too in India, where women are still not allowed to flourish and flower. They are still behind the veil of shame, shame of being born as a woman. In such a country, if a woman comes out and speaks her

mind, then it creates havoc in the social order, and it had created havoc in past. There are many instances where Asian women had tried to come out of the veil of shame, and had tried to listen to their hearts, but in their respective ages they were contempt for not following the rules, rules that were laid by the so called 'male' of the society for their own selfish ends. There if a woman bravely expresses her mind then one can imagine the uproar it can create, may it be through the journalism, literature, or just speaking for the womanly rights, she is always noticed. De's life-story is a sparkling record of what an ordinary but determined Indian woman can do.

Kamala Das is one of the most distinctive female writers of her time. Her autobiography 'My Story' (1976) is one of the bold, uninhibited self revelations seen in recent times. It is an attempt at redefining male-female relationship. It is a challenging account of the writer's mental as well as physical urges. It is an account of a woman who tries to live traditionally but is forced to break the social rules in order to satisfy her instincts. Her childhood was spoiled by color discrimination and cultural taboos. Being brown, she faced discrimination in European school. She was treated rudely by British students and also tortured many a times when visitors came to school she was discretely hidden away. Being Indian she had to face color bar meted down by British teachers and students. Her father used often harsh methods on her and her brother to fit them indo British cultural scenario. She declares:

"I wondered why I was not born to white couple who may have been proud of my verses."

She had also faced gender discrimination at a very tender age when she saw her mother obey her father timidly and creating an illusion of domestic harmony in social circle, while in reality their marriage was a mismatch. Kamala Das' life-story is set in the once matrilineal framework of the Nair Tharavad. Colonization and the imposition of western notions of morality upon the native systems influenced her peculiar individual position. From the secure and serene warmth of the Nalukettu, both Kamala and her mother were taken away into the rashness of a city culture. They were not accustomed to their new social set up. From a matrilineal and matrilocal framework that offered complete security to the women and their kids were thrust into a westernized patriarchal society. Women who were habituated to gentle maternal care and consideration certainly are at a loss in a male centered society.

Women autobiographers have subverted the importance of the concept of marriage. Kamala was never interested in getting married and binding herself within the confinement of domesticities. She was interested in study and career. After her husband's sudden death, she came back to her village to live like an ordinary woman, even then some orthodox villagers tried to empoison and kill her to save family's honor. Her life shows the tests a woman has to pass throughout her life. 'My Story' offers insights into Kamala Das as writer and poet and her unusual relationship with a gay husband, whom she married as a 16 year old, when he was 36. The marriage lasted for 43 years, until Madhav Das's death. Das talks of love affairs very frankly. Kamala expresses her inner urge:

“A writer moves away from family, old relationships, very far, with the speed of a falling star….Otherwise, the writer is destroyed, and only the member of the family remains: the mother, sister, daughter, wife,…..she will have to write against her loved one, put him under the microscope, dissect him, analyze his thoughts, his words. After a while, he is no longer the man you held in your arms at night. You have cut him in little silvers, everything is burst open, he is seeds and pulp and juice.’’

According to O.J. Thomas - *"Kamala Das' story is the story of a woman who was denied love, when she valued nothing but love in all her life. Love and affection remained a craze, a longing and a dream for her. She got almost everything in life-name and fame, a degree of wealth but she could never get love, and she saw it. It is in this background that she writes about love in all her writings."*

Das firmly believed that love is the essence of life for a woman. She longs to receive and to give love. Her romantic ideas about love and home have been shattered by an insensitive husband. Her husband hurt her and evoked a sense of disappointment in her.

Kamla Das’ early marriages throw light on the evil of child marriage in Indian society. In India, children are married at a very unripe age, when they know nothing about marriage or physical and emotional relations. In uneducated and lower sections of the society this custom is still prevalent, though it is declared as a crime by the government.

In India divorce is also not a common feature. A lot of stigma is attached to a divorced woman. Das too is very much bothered about public opinion she sticks to her marriage while suffering within. She was not educated enough to get a good job and live independently. Furthermore, as a mother of three kids she had to give a second thought to the matter of divorce. The reasons she gives for not getting a divorce are noteworthy. She observes:

"My parents and other relatives were obsessed with public opinion and bothered excessively with our society's reaction to any action of an individual. A broken marriage was a distasteful, as horrifying as an attack of leprosy. If I had at the time listened to the dictates of my conscience and had left my husband, I would have found it impossible to merry me, for I was not conspicuously pretty and besides there was the two year old who would have been to the new husband an encumbrance."

Thus, Das comes to the fore-front with the innermost doubts and wishes of the modern Indian woman. The most remarkable point of Das' life- story is her confessional tone. She is at her best in the exploration of the female self. Her autobiography is the collective repository of woman's experience that would ordinarily be treated as superfluous. Nevertheless, Das has subverted patriarchal stereotypes by externalizing her innermost self.

Dr. Shubha Tiwari has illustrated the childhood of various women autobiographers in her book 'Children and Literature'. She remarks that *"as a child Kamala was very ordinary in her looks."* At the tender age of nine she was made conscious of her complexion. Her

grandmother rubbed raw turmeric all over her body before the oil bath. Her father found her to be too rustic for his likings. So kamala was admitted to a boarding school run by the German Catholic nuns. Kamala was given proper education but her father was quite orthodox. At the age of fifteen, Kamala was forced to marry a person quite double her age. She comments:

"I was a burden and a responsibility neither my parents nor my grandmother could put up with for long. Therefore with the blessing of all, our marriage was fixed."

Her story gives us feelings of her identity of her inner urge for freedom, self-assertion, autonomy and establishment of her identity. She could not reconcile herself to a subordinate position in her life. Her husband could not satisfy her emotional needs and she had to seek compassions outside her marriage for her emotional needs. She has willfully turned to several men in the hope that she would one day be able to find an ideal lover who would love her for her own sake, who would not treat her as sexual object she has searched in her life for pure and unconditioned love.

Kamala Das was in dilemma over her marriage. She has realized that it was not love, but sex that marriage as an institution legalized. She was ready to defy subverting the traditional expectations from women. She felt that like men women too had the right to satisfy their needs.

Nayantara Sahgal (born 10 May 1927) is an Indian writer in English. Her fiction deals with India's elite responding to the crisis engendered by political change; she was one of the first female Indian writers in English to receive wide recognition. She is a member of the Nehru Gandhi Family, the second of the three daughters born to Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. She has written her autobiographies in two parts, "Prison and Chocolate Cakes" and "From Fear' Set Free". Her autobiographies throw light on the political condition of the time as well as on the status of higher class women of the time. Even in pre-independence era women of higher class had opportunity to grow and assert their position, could express their love, make love marriage and get divorce if they felt suffocated.

They were provided good education, sent abroad for higher study. Nayantara's mother fought election, graced high positions at state, country and U.N.O. level. Even then in her autobiography she asserts the restrictions laid on her despite being a member of elite class, how her mother had to face disappointment and sympathy of people being a mother of three female children without a male child, though the family was highly educated. She comments on the cathartic function of literature like this:-

“Writing of any sort helps to put your own world in order, all the shapeless bewildering fragments of it. These are the things that will never be understood until they are written, and sometimes not even then. But writing helps the process.”

Rajmata Gayatri Devi was the last of the Queens of Jaipur in Rajasthan. Gayatri Devi was the daughter of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan and Maharani Indirea Devi of the "Koch" dynasty of Coch Behar. She was born on the 23rd May 1919. After schooling in India she finished her education in Switzerland and London. At the age of 19 she fell in love with Man Singh, the heir to the Jaipur throne. Their marriage was initially opposed by her parents, as Man Singh already had two wives, the daughters of the Maharaja of Jodhpur. However, her parents gave in to her determination, and she was married to Man Singh in 1939.

In A Princess Remembers: The Memoirs of the Maharani of Jaipur, Gayatri Devi narrates her life story and allows her readers to get glimpses of her life of excess and extravagance, how she was raised in a lavish palace which staffed over 500 servants, and shot her first panther when she was just twelve. In the book, Gayatri Devi writes about her carefree tomboy childhood, her courtship with the Maharaja of Jaipur, and her marriage and experiences living in the City Palace of Jaipur. She re-iterates about how she had to adjust to the new customs and traditions and life with the Maharaja's other two wives. This book provides an incisive look into the extraordinary life of one of the world's most fascinating women and an informal history of the princely states of India. Her life story is a blend of courage, romance, devotion, losses and elegance. It also depicts the condition of women in royal class. There is dichotomy in higher class women's position. Where women were victims of polygamy, veil system and other evil customs of society. It presents the seeds of Marxism, the polarity of class in Indian society. On the one hand there are aristocrats, leading a life of luxury, on the other hand there are poor's who can't survive. Anyhow, Gayatri Devi's autobiography "The Princess Remembers" (1975) is a landmark in the autobiographical writings by Indian 'Maharanis'. It is the story of queen of Jaipur who gave up 'Purdah 'to join politics and won every election. She played a vital role in the welfare of her state of Jaipur. Her life-story concentrates more on the personal events of her life than on politics.

Jhamak Kumari Ghimire, the physically challenged Nepali women writer; expressed her identity, agony and life burning experiences through her autobiography 'A Flower in the Midst of Thorns'. Her story reveals her perseverance and solidity despite her physical, handicap against patriarchal dominance and social presides. She transgresses the limitations of women's body, sexuality and social chords and became one among Nepal's most influential women writers. Though physically incapacitated, she did not hesitate to discuss her life in terms of her hopes, dreams and aspirations. Jhamak Ghimire discusses the sex discrimination in Nepal society which she faces by her grandmother. She was treated badly by her grandfather. If she did not obey him he scolded her saying unfortunate bad creature and cursed her a lot. She had to fight her own way to the gate of success.

Jhamak Ghimire was one of the nine women in Nepal to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. She has overcome the challenges of being a disabled female in Nepal, who was denied access to schooling in her childhood, to become a journalist and poet. Her story and self-determination are an inspiration to many in Nepal. She has been honoured with a number of awards for her work. Some of her collections of poems include: 'Sankalpa'; 'Afnae Chita

Agni Shikha Tira'; 'ManchheVitraka Yoddhaharu' and 'Naulo Pratibimba'. Collections of other writings and essays include; 'Awasan Pachhiko Agaman'; 'Samjhanaka Bachhitah';

At the age of nineteen, Jhamak Kumari Ghimire burst onto Nepal's literary scene with several collections of poems, songs, journal entries, stories and essays that showed off her remarkable mastery of language and literature, and insight into the social realities of which she writes . Born with a severe disability that has robbed her of motor control of her arms, slurred her speech, and limited her movement, Jhamak Kumari writes with her foot. Her sensibility is anything but restricted, though. With a skill that rivals that of the best progressive writers of today, she explores hard political, intellectual, feminist and social issues, without shying away from emotional expressions of love, regret, joy and sadness. The intensity of her voice is riveting…There may not be anyone for whom the written word carries so much urgency. Here is someone who palpably lives by her words.

"No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars or sailed to an unchartered land or opened a new doorway for the human spirit" - Hellen Killer.

Cerebral palsy is just a medical problem and biologically, it is a state of human disability with the weak joint muscles and blur vision. But the realization of how a female victim of disability goes through the series of torturous challenges in our patriarchal society is totally heart rendering. An ideal definition of beauty, feminine body and secret parts of a woman by our social and cultural norms is put upside down by this courageous autobiography. At the same time the writer pities upon the so called normal people of the society who themselves are disabled, blind and rude and shows inhuman behavior to the one who already is in pain.

Taslima Nasreen opened a window to Bengali girls condition through her autobiography Meyebela, Utol Hawa. Through her autobiography she reveals the fate of millions of girls and women living in society in which females are treated as second class citizens. Taslima rose a voice against injustice and suffering endured by her mother and other women and brought her experiences on pages which provoked the fanatic Maulvis against her and they declared a fatwa for her. She waged a courageous war against gender prejudice with honesty and integrity. In her autobiography Taslima relates how girl child is sexually abused even by relatives. She is not allowed to get medical education because she is a girl child and her brothers are encouraged to opt for medical studies which they are unable to pass. A women has to tolerate the extra marital relations of her husband as does her mother. Women as a servant is also not safe and exploited by her employers. As does Taslima's father with her servant. Her autobiography is a voice of feminism against the patriarchal society bias against feminine.

Taslima experiences feelings of powerlessness, confusion and humiliation as two of her uncles sexually abuse her. However, their attitude towards the victim displays different strategies of manipulation and silencing. Both characters impose their will on their victims by force and threaten them with a fierce punishment unless they keep silent. Additionally, they both ignore the physical harm they cause their younger female relatives during the sexual

assault, apart from the obvious emotional injuries. At her turn, Nasrin the narrator presents an unscrupulous Sharaf who is amused to take advantage of his younger niece and shows no sign of compassion. "Uncle Sharaf laughed and threw himself down on me. Then, with one hand he removed my shorts once more, and with the other took off his own, pressing his willie hard against my body. My chest felt heavy; I could not breathe. I tried to push him away. 'What are you doing, Uncle Sharaf? Let me go!' I shrieked, pushing with all my might. But I could not move him an inch. Uncle Sharaf pushed himself harder against me. It looked so ugly to me, I covered my eyes with my hands. Suddenly, a rat scurried across the floor. The noise made Uncle Sharaf jump off the cot. I did not lose a second. Pulling my shorts up I ran out of the room as fast as I could, with not a thought to spare about the snakes in the bushes. My heart thudded crazily, as if a hundred rats were jumping in my chest. Uncle Sharaf called after me in a threatening voice: 'Don't tell anyone about this. If you do, I will kill you!" Her story shows the condition of girls in our society.

Significantly, the female children attempt to defend themselves and escape their male oppressors' entanglement; although they are confused and too inexperienced to understand the implications of the event, naively asking 'What are you doing?', they feel that it is something that should not happen and strive to return to a safer environment.

Taslima comprehend that her abusers are stronger than she is and that she is trapped. Hence, seeks to evade the distressing scene by looking away or covering her eyes. The traumatic feelings triggered by these violent acts are textually mirrored by highly suggestive phrases like 'terror-stricken' or by means of comparison - 'a hundred rats jumping in my chest'. Furthermore, Taslima's second sexual victimization (quoted below) is narrated with the help of phrases like 'horror', 'went numb with fear', or 'totally petrified'. To get my hands on the matchbox I moved nearer to Uncle Aman. He pulled me to him. Then, instead of giving me the matches, he started tickling me. I shrank like a snail. He picked up my tense, curled-up body and threw it in the air. He caught me as I fell, his hand sliding down my body, stopping at my panties. Then he began pulling my panties down. I tried to roll off the bed. My feet were on the floor, my back still on the bed, my panties near my knees, my knees neither on the floor nor on the bed. Uncle lifted his lungi. I saw a big snake raise its head between his legs, poised for attack. I went numb with fear, but to my greater horror, the snake did attack, in that little place between my thighs – once, twice, thrice. I remained totally petrified. Staring into my wide eyes, Uncle said, 'Would you like a candy'? Tomorrow, I will buy you candy. Look, here's the matchbox. Take it. And listen, sweetheart, don't tell anyone that you have seen my cock and I have seen your little sweet pussy. It's bad to talk about such things. You must tell no one.' Uncle Aman had told me not to tell anyone else. I started to think he was right. It was not something one talked about. Suddenly, at the age of seven, I was filled with a new awareness. Whatever had happened was shameful, and it would not be right to talk about it. It had to be kept a secret. Taslima's story unravels the precarious condition of women in our society.

Taslima becomes the victim of two male abusers, both being her uncles, each of them expressing themselves differently. Whereas Sharaf threatens to kill her if she fails to remain

silent, Aman, more experienced, treats Taslima according to her young age. In this sense, he seeks to trick her by promising to buy her candies, calling her 'sweetheart', and then typically impel the victim to preserve the secret. When employing the term 'typically', what is meant is the common strategy used by the offender to persuade the victim that she will also suffer severe consequences in case the abuse is disclosed. Taslima perceives the gravity of the threats more acutely than other victims of sexual assault whose abusers are unfamiliar to them. In other words, in Asia, 'the female child is powerless: her position in the family structure (as child, not adult), her lack of life experience does not often give her the structural or emotional power to fend off sexual advances.' Nasrin's autobiographical writing is a representation of the emotional and psychological effects of the abuse.

The poignancy of being the victim of such a violent act determines Nasrin to seek refuge in writing about her unspoken experience; the vehemence of her long hidden feelings, the tumult of her memories, and the need to disclose the crime in detail offer her the necessary tools to fabricate a reliable and authentic storyline. Moreover, the Bengali writer Nasrin strives to generate the impression that the abuse is narrated from the perspective of her self as a child. Hence, she suggests that the tone and the linguistic repertoire of the fragment are instruments employed by a female child narrator, whose naivety hinders her to comprehend that her descriptive speech on the sexual abuse involves taboo issues concerning language and behavior. The advantage in opting for a first person narrator's perspective confers her story a plus of authenticity and veracity. The protagonist Taslima, despite her youth and naivety, is affected by the violent events that suddenly generate the seven-years-old girl's untimely psychological maturity, manifested in her reflection on the implications of the experience. Analyzing the threats of her abusers and internalizing the feelings of shame and humiliation, Taslima herself feels guilty and responsible for what has happened to her. Nasrin stories, that neither the religious, nor the territorial factor seems to play a decisive role in the question of child sexual abuse.

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate. She is known for human rights advocacy, especially education of women in her native Swat Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistan, where the local Taliban had at times banned girls from attending school. Her advocacy has since grown into an international movement.

The present study also deals with Pakistani girls Malala's autobiography 'I am Malala'. In her autobiography she describes on October 9, 2012. On her way home from school a man boarded the bus Malala was riding in and demanded to know which girls was Malala. When her friends looked at Malala the gunman fired at her, hitting Malala on the left side of her head. The bullet then traveled down her neck. She survived. The shooting left Malala in a critical condition, so she was flown to a military hospital in Peshawar and put into a medically induced comma. A portion of her skull was removed to treat her swelling brain. To receive further care, she was transferred to Birmingham, England. Though she would require multiple operations surgeries, including the repair of a facial nerve to fix the paralyzed left side of her face, she had suffered no major brain damage. In March 2013, she was able to

start going to school in Birmingham. All these experiences are expressed by Malala in her autobiography. Malala autobiography is a revaluation of women's condition in Pakistan. They are even not allowed to study. Only her father was eager to get her education.

These women's life narratives generate new possibilities of being read. Whichever be the genre, women's life narratives seek affirmation in the correcting mode. By bringing the personal life into public, these women challenge and articulate gender concerns vis-a-vis caste and religion. Therefore, they cannot be reduced to 'narrations of pain and sorrow' or 'memories of a hateful life' but go beyond these.

Reading woman's life narratives without a political ideology stands the risk of making a spectacle of women's suffering and pain. The narrations bring new insights into male dominant academic institutions, assuming importance in the construction of curriculum. The subject provides a platform for discussion of women's life narratives to explore links between the historical devaluation of women, their writing practices, exclusion of their writing from the canon of traditional autobiographies, cultural biases in defining the selfhood, revising the prevailing concept of autobiography and other perspectives.

Thus, all these women writers included in the research work are towering twentieth century Asian women. Though they revolted at individual levels, basically they are Asian women and proud to be so. Not very welcomed at the time of their births but proved excellent through their deeds they voice the core emotions of all the daughters, irrespective of their countries. They have taught mankind to be proud of her daughters forever.

The great critic George Gusdorf compares the autobiographer to a historian, who narrates his/her own history. He is the hero of his own tale and wants to unfold his past in order to draw out the structure of his being in time.

Elaine Showalter after divides feminine writing into two distinct verities. First type women as read and the second type as a writer. As a woman produces text, with history theme, genres and structure of literature by women. These autobiographers present a feminist poetics, revealing the psychodynamics of female creativity with female language. They present women victimization which is their destiny from one generation to the next. In their poetics, they undergo feminist phase by rejecting the posture of femininity and use literature to dramatized the ordeals of wrong womanhood. In the female phase the reject imitation and dependency and become autonomous. Their hermeneutics present a new language born out of there sufferings and tortures.

Autobiography occupies a central space in Asian women's writing as the primal genre through which Asian women have participated in the representation of their experiences and the shopping of literature. The autobiography discusses in the present study contain a great deal of data showing the experiences of the women in the construction of their fictional canvasses. These writers commute freely between the world of autobiography and fiction, even to the extent that some writers describe their life stories mere reproduction. Their works

represent all women in their countries. This literarily tradition has increased the explorable thematic concern for critics also, as their women found their autobiography an opt medium to represent the history and socio-cultural realities of their society. Taslima Nasreen, Malala, Kamla Das, Shoba De, Amrita Pritam, Jhamak Ghimire, Nayantara Sehgal and Gayatri Devi all present a regional approach to their countries tradition and highlight how Asian women have negotiated cultural social and communal values without risking their personal values.

The autobiographies of Asian women are significant because they are more traditional and conservative and their happiness depends on their family and society. Any deviation from their values are creates havoc in their life. Their life is a sheltered life dominated their males in their family and society.

These women evoke a female community in their works. There autobiography are commentaries on the lives of the Asian women in male dominated society. They merrier experiences of the women torched through norms or traditions of the society.

These women concentrate upon the notion of self-identity with in the society. All of them alienated not only physically but phycological also. They all have to struggle a lot to achieve their goals in an unsympathetic and complicated world.

Prof. Meena Sodhi appreciates natural creative genius of a woman auto biographer and opines that she can defend herself hood and narrate the story of her life very boldly. There is nothing unnatural in her creativity, which can ’t be a rival to her biological creativity. She advocates the ideas of radical feminists who consider woman’s literary creativity as a superior endowment:

“… the literary professions were first to be opened to women, the status of the women writer has long served as an index of a society’s views on female abilities and rights. Although writing has never been regarded as an unfeminine accomplishment, women writers have always encountered more critical resistance than men”.

Dalip Kaur Tiwana was born on 4 May 1935 in village Rabbon in the Ludhiana district of Punjab in a well-to-do land-owning family. She was educated at Patiala, where her uncle, Sardar Sahib Tara Singh Sidhu, was Inspector General of Prisons. She had a distinguished academic career. She got first class first in M.A., and was the first woman in the region to get the Ph.D. degree from the Punjab University, Chandigarh.

In 1963, she joined the Punjabi University, Patiala as a lecturer and then went on to become Professor and the Head of the Department of Punjabi, and Dean, Faculty of Languages. She was a brilliant teacher and researcher and made a significant contribution to literary and critical studies in Punjabi. She was also a UGC National Lecturer for a year.

She was married to sociologist and Poet Prof. Bhupinder Singh and has a son Dr. Simranjit Singh, who is an Assistant Professor of Electronics and Communication at Punjabi

University. Dr Tiwana lived with her family on the campus of Punjabi University, Patiala, where she was life fellow and writer-in-residence. On 14 October 2015, she returned Padma Shri award against increasing intolerance in the country. She received this award in 2004 for her contribution to literature and education.

The characters in Tiwana's novels and short-stories are the downtrodden and the innocent rural folk with suppressed desires and passions. Tragedy and irony mark the main elements of her fiction. Complex inner duality of the female psyche is the chief theme of Tiwana. Besides her achievement in fiction, Tiwana has written two books on literary criticism too.

Her life story *A Journey on Bare Feet* reveals the conflict in a girl's mind about the social systems, and the naked truth of the condition of women in rich families. She is much pained to see how women are treated in such families. They are misbehaved and cursed for not producing a son. Husband is ready to remarry for the sake of a son. She spends most of her childhood in her aunt's house, who has malice for her mother and who wants to usurp her father's property by hooks or crooks.

These women's autobiographies deal mainly with the emotional turbulence of women and their relationships in the social set up. A deeper study of the autobiographies unravels the hidden secrets of feminine psyche and the sick psyche of Indian society. What so ever the position of woman may be, behind every social stigma, there is a woman either in the role of mother in law, sister in law or wife. Most of the autobiographies reveal that fathers always encouraged the bold and broader outlook of their daughters. In the words of Erik Eriksson:

"These autobiographies are written at certain late stages of life for the purpose of recreating oneself in the image of one's own method and they are written to make the image convincing."

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Chapter - II

Psychoanalysis of Autobiographies

An autobiography is a literature of personal revelation and its main interest lies in conscious or unconscious self-portrayal by the author. The writer must not give an account of his external life and largely in chronological order, but he must give an account of his inner life. i.e. Sensation and Psyche and the ideas and emotions that keep floating not only through his/ her conscious self, but also through the unconscious one. Both this external and internal life should find a literary expression and this need not only command over language but also an artistic self-control and ordering of material. Different social, cultural, literary, and political matters that have gone in to the making of author's personality are expressed genuinely. A genuine autobiography is full of truth, philosophy, psychology and history.

The ever-changing reality of life inevitably reflects itself in literature. The position of women in society is no exception to this phenomenon. The status of women all over the world particularly in Asia has been undergoing a rapid change in recent times. Woman defined, as the center of culture, is actually imprisoned in the walls of the family and shackled by tradition. She now looks upon herself from a different angle. The Asian women writers have voiced their feelings through their sensibilities, their awareness about feminine problems. It is the male society, which compels her to choose her roles according to its convenience. She is forced to act as either a slave or an idol. Indian patriarchal social setup makes writing autobiography indeed a very difficult task for a woman writer. Keeping in mind the social and cultural constraints Tharu and Lalita point out:

"Autobiography as a genre exhibits a certain ambivalence. The accent is on the personal. The existential contours of a life and the preoccupation with intimate, even confessional details often that autobiography always draws on the repertoire of life scripts that cultures provide at particular junctures in their history. Recurrent themes in many nineteenth-century memoirs are the woman's joy in the love and support of a progressive husband and her education and the new possibilities that opened out to her. But even in relatively conventional accounts we come across passages that give us a glimpse of many-faceted struggles involved: the pain of being constantly watched and corrected; the feeling that they were not good enough; the exhausting demands of the new housework; the uncertainty and anxiety involved in raising children in the new mode, outside the reassuring circle of the traditional family; the longing for the support of a world they had lost, and so on".

Here are some women autobiographers who have subverted the marginal position and acquired an independent position in the male dominated Asian society. Nayantara Sahgal, Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Shobhaa De, Gayatri Devi, Malala, Jhamak and Taslima Nasreen have expressed innermost desires and wishes of twentieth century woman. They are the real selves of New woman. Though born and brought up in the conservative environs of twentieth century India, they have been proved distinctly individual. Born with a female

body, possessing feminine qualities they have been turned out as new women with strong determination. They possess strong sense of freedom. Though they have not ignored their responsibilities. The autobiographers namely Gayatri Devi, Nayantara Sahgal, Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Shobhaa De, Malala, Jhamak Ghimire and Taslima Nasreen can be termed strictly feminists.

Their life-stories contain not only a voice of protest but also strong sense of freedom in them. Their life-stories however truly exhibit their inner voyages and a woman persona within & without. Meena Sodhi has advocated women's capacity of critical resistance in her critical work, 'Indian writing in English- The autobiographical mode'.

"However, we find whole women autobiographers who consider women's culture, as a 'sub-culture', men's culture being the main culture, with the women confirming mainly to it. A woman is taught to be selfless, submissive and is only a daughter, a wife or a mother.''

A woman autobiographer finds herself in this awful predicament due to the oppressive effects of patriarchy which maintains double moral standards towards sexes. This attitude gets manifested in women's autobiographies in both explicit as well as implicit ways. Through her literary creations and her own life story of amazing courage, with achievements and challenges, she has attempted to display women's inner yearnings, and aspirations and ways to outwit the opposers and challengers of women. Taslima Nasreen expresses the same insecure feelings in a girl's mind in lustful society. Her family's flight from the violent city into the villages of Bangladesh was the beginning of a series of traumatic childhood experiences that shook her childhood acceptance of things as they are and opened her eyes to a new consciousness of the reality behind social and interpersonal relationships. She writes of the situation where the child is being victimized by the society:

"If the child had learnt to read the lust in the eyes of the Pakistani soldiers who had peered through the mosquito nets enshrouding her at night, she would not have victimized herself in her autobiography."

Amrita Pritam holds autobiography as a tool in the hands of a writer to achieve "the basic truth which is the writer's own need" and "a continuous process that leads from one reality to another". Writings are record personal experiences. One needs to be familiar with the events of writers' lives to fully comprehend their works. The essential trait of their writings is reconstruction of their own selves. Adil Jussawalla, in his book, New Writing in India, has included the poems of both, Amrita Pritam and Kamala Das, in the third part of the book about which he says,

"The third part consists of writing I shall call persona. The writing in this part is concerned with describing highly subjective states of mind and exploring existential problems."

A sense of neglect tormented these women's psyche. In their autobiographies, one finds the evidence of awakened and agonized souls in anguished turmoil over their lonesome

existence. Both, Amrita Pritam and Kamala Das had inherited poetic talents and started writing poetry at an early age. Their repressed inner urges and emotions of rebellion found expression in their poetry. With their creativity, these poets emerged out of the inner darkness into a sunlit valley. They had unhappy married lives and sought love outside marriage. They chose poetry as a medium of self-expression to relieve themselves of their unhappiness. There is no denying the fact that ancient Indian aesthetics showed little interest in the personality of the author. Still, India can boast of a rich autobiographical tradition outlook to life. English language and literature cemented the autobiographical tradition in India. Any autobiographical writing constitutes the personality of the writer. However, in the case of women-writers, the subject and self of the author coalesce to form a coherent unity.

A woman's writing tends to be a contradiction between fact and fiction. Female autobiography is generally imaginative, fictitive, metaphorical and digressive. A woman writer's life-story turns out to be a spontaneous and instinctive expression. The focus is more on the emotional aspects of life. Female auto-biographers have almost always talked about their parents, their marriages, their husbands and their in-laws at length. They remain conscious of themselves as women and write from a woman's point of view. Their autobiographies are records not only of their lives, but also of the lives of women surrounding them. All women have the same life history, a record of pain and insult. The ordeal of Amrita Pritam is reflected in her autobiography, 'The Rashidi Ticket' or 'The Revenue Stamp, an autobiography which captures her entire life in its fold. The confessional strains are very much evident here in that Amrita makes a candid confession of the intimate experiences of her life. Even a casual reading of autobiography suggests that all the experiences of her life since childhood have been created and lived under some shadow or another: the shadows of death, weapons, words, dreams, patriarchy, and shadows of authoritarian power, shadows of contemplation and shadows of unrequited love. Amrita Pritam has a longing for satisfaction and fulfillment. She shows amazing courage, willpower, resilience and achievements.

Amrita Pritam has woven a prodigious mass of personal experiences into the texture of her writings. It is necessary, therefore, to peep into those experiences of her life which have direct bearing on her writings. Her experience of growing up as a loner accounts for acute emotional vacuum in her writings. Her marital life was not successful, the evidences of which we very often get in her autobiography and numerous other writings. Amrita Pritam's autobiography, therefore, is a personal testimony of the new sense of worth she experienced as 'individual'. She presents the portrait of a woman in Indian society who has to face humiliation in family, society and at workplace:

"There have been so many days when I have held my pen close to my breast and wept and wept."

She comments that the only thing which did not let her down at the time of partition was her pen. Life, Love, Labor, Lower attitude of people, Last hope all are well stamped in her story.

The most conspicuous trait that is evident in Amrita's autobiography is a woman's battle against authoritarian and male hegemonic discourse and her determination "to dare to live the life she imagines". Her writing is celebrated for its sensuous imagery and evocative rhythm and is widely read and appreciated, though it has also been criticized as vacuous and sentimental. She writes:

"Society attacks anyone who dares to say its coins counterfeit, but when it is a woman who says this, society begins to foam at the mouth. It puts aside all its theories and arguments and picks up the weapon of filth to fling at her".

Her writings after 1960 deal more and more with women who acknowledge their desires and their independence and accept responsibilities for their lives even at the cost of love. Her mother was the sole inspiration behind this spirit of rebellion in her. Her mother, she writes,

'never failed in the slightest degree to honor and obey my father's male will... [but] collected all the anger from her mind and poured it into my infant being'.

Women writers have to resurrect and heal a self that has been mutilated by patriarchal constraints. In dealing with the chaos inflicted by society the woman writer glimpsed a power within her own psyche from a non-patriarchal, feminine point of view. In her newly sculpted feminine discourse, a woman is seen as a complete person, blessed with her creativity and rationality, unbounded by the conventional codes of sanctity, alone. She also handled, with precision, contemporary issues which trapped women, like female feticide, son-preference, sexual objectification of women, and institutionalization of motherhood. As a writer, Amrita Pritam redefined female writing in Punjabi and became a Pan-Punjabi voice on both sides of the border in the post-partition era.

Amrita in her autobiography demolished the polished image of Punjabi women, created by male writers down the centuries. Punjabi literature was yet not ready for a woman of such exemplary courage. She was one of the early Indian women writers, who, through her literary creations laid down the modern concept of womanhood. Her protagonists are examples of the modern Indian women, who fearlessly reject being a puppet in the hands of man-made destiny, and strongly casts aside the traditional image of women. Her writings depict, in an emphatic way, the emergence of the new woman who is questioning the conventional norms of chastity, seeking simultaneously the oration of the demands of her body as well as her mind.

'The worst aspect of writing', reminds Shobhaa De*, 'whether it's a memoir or a racy novel is that you can't share the experience with anyone. It can be hellishly lonely sometimes. A feeling of such isolation, you ask yourself why you are punishing yourself like this. What for? There have to be better options" (Selective Memory 3).* Yet the expression of the self is a major feminist concern for her as *"an unbearable pain reverberates through the entire body" (Selective Memory 3).*

Amrita Pritam's is a study of an autobiography of a woman who evolves from a sentimental girl to an emotional woman and then to a passionate individual. The 'Revenue Stamp' is the book that confirms her artistic skills. It is an affirmation of the life she lived as a woman and as a poet; her autobiography is her stamp on the cognitive life vision of a woman, who has not only loved poetry, but also lived poetry. The Revenue Stamp reflects her rebellious ideas; it is an expression of romantic mind and the sufferings of woman in her.

'The Revenue Stamp' is an autobiography in the sense of the word, since it is self-discovery of a mind. Amrita reveals an uncommon sense of self- analysis with no conscious regard for social criteria of moral judgments. Being a poet, she maintains the grace of her creativity while narrating the story of her life. Her vision of life is broad enough to make her story the 'Stamp of Truth.' Her unusual feminine awareness explores a process of development and she visualizes this process as a fulfillment of her quest for life. She suffered a profound feeling of loneliness, since she had no brother or sister to share her grief. In her sixteen year, Amrita started writing love poems secretly and tore them, as she was afraid of her father. He encouraged her to write poems but only on religious and patriotic matters. Her father represents the patriarch of discipline and orderliness of life. Amrita has no option but to follow the orders obediently. Apparently, she was praying to show obedience to her father, but actually was thinking and visualizing about her friend whom she had named 'Raj'. Her inner self was already moving towards the unconventional ideas.

At the age of four, Amrita was engaged and was a teenager of sixteen when she was married off to Pritam Singh of Lahore. Thus, the name 'Pritam' was suffixed to her name from 1935. Half A dozen poems were to follow in as many years between 1936 and 1943 Though, she began her journey as a romantic poet soon he sifted gear and became part of the progressive writers movement and its effect was seen in her Look Peed (peoples anguish) 1944, which was openly criticized. Amrita started working at Lahore and Delhi Radio stations, as an announcer and writing poems, stories, novels, articles on various themes.

She left Lahore at the time of partition she moved to Delhi as a refugee. Here she expressed her anguish on a piece of paper as the poem, *"Ajj Akhaan Warish Shah nu", 'I as a Warish Shah today;'* this poem became the most immortal work of her creations and became the most poignant reminder of the horrors and violence of partition. The poem addressed to Sufi poet Warish Shah Author of the tragic saga Heer and Ranjha and with whom she share her birth place some excerpts of the poem is like this,

''Ajj Aakaanwaris Shah Nun keiton Kabraan Vichchon vol,

Te Ajj Kitab-e-Ishq Daa Agla varkaphol UtahDard Dia uthtak apane Punjab,

Ajjbele Lakhan Bicchian Te Ik Roi Si di Punjab DiTu likh mare vane

Ajj Lakahann Dhian Rondia Tainan Warish Shsh Khain Lahu Di Bhari Chenab."

English Version :

Today I call Warish shah speak from your grave and turn Today, the book of love next affectionate page once a daughter of Punjab cried and you wrote availing saga Today a million Daughters cry to you Warish shah Rise! O narrator of the graving: rise, Look at your Punjab today, fields are lined with copses, and blood fills the Chenab.

The autobiography introduces a decision theme; the writer's deep impulse for the inward dimensions of the self, springing from the compulsion to mediate and introspect. Childhood 'Seemingly entombed' can become a part of the present alive existence, in the process of recollection and contemplation for autobiography. The memories of childhood lie buried in the 'womb of time' but never die. She recalls how she had a troubled sense of truth and its utterance right from her childhood:

"I never told an untruth to father; I can never lie to myself either"

Amrita never told lie to her father to find herself 'the master' after the father to whom she had always spoken the truth, she confesses her first revolt to the fathers creed, when her faith in God was shaken. She had offered a prayer to God during her mother's sickness for her longer life and recover but her mother passed away. She refused to follow the routine of prayer and argued with her father for the first time.

"I burst out in red-hot rage, God heeds no one, not even children … there is no God"

'You mustn't say that'

'He has ways of showing his worth'

'Let Him! But how can he when he isn't there?'

'How do you know?'

'Would He not have heard me…?

Had He been anywhere! I said please don't let my Mother die.'

'Is He deaf?"

It was the first moment of disillusionment and Amrita Pritam gave up all her practice of routine prayer and meditation. This proves that rebellion is rooted in the soil of discontent, disillusionment and disabling circumstances. Being a very emotional girl she found it very difficult to be alone and happy writing became her only companion to give solace at every step of life, whether beguiled in love or called by people a lustful ant:

"I began writing and it seems to me that I wrote because I wanted to forget those moments of rejection I felt in him …In addition, an every poem I wrote I carried the cross of forbidden desires … My rebellious thoughts pushed me, giving me no peace."

Not that her father objected to her act of writing poems but he expected her to compose either religion poems or conventional ones and she had no courage initially to break his expectations. Catherine Brown has a relevant generalization about woman's expression when she remarks,

"In a very obvious mode, a woman is expected to be attractive but passive, shy and homely, up to the extent of timidity rather than assertive, active or competitive. Most woman writers unconsciously adopt the expected image and find them guilty often whenever they encounter bold decision or attitude in their own experience."

To make her father happy, she wrote some orthodox poems and presented herself, "like an obedient child". However, her real spirit conquered her presentation soon and she explicitly started asserting her individuality. She recalls her,

"I questioned parental authority, I questioned the value of doing my work at school by vote; I questioned what had been preached to me and I questioned the entire stratified social scheme… I was thirsty for life… what I got instead was advice and constraint, which only fed my rebellion."

Amrita's penetrations of how those small things and events in childhood affected her development are so accurate that one cannot doubt her capacity of her psychological penetration she ponders.

"I suppose everyone goes through this phase. However, it happened to me with three time's greater impact. First, there was the drabness of middle class morality; then; the dosage of 'don'ts' thrust down my throat, which somehow I felt I would have been spared, had my mother been alive. There was the over bearing presentation of my father, a man of religion."

The seed of her creativity and rebellion was thus down in her childhood and teenage agony; this agony was resultant of loneliness and lack of love. Amrita's childhood and youth passed without any great event except the loss of her mother with whom she also lost her faith in God. A woman's life related to love in various forms. The affinity between the two is so close that both seem to constitute the very core of existence. The concept of love and woman's existence are so closely interrelated that love occupies a very valuable space in woman's life as a determinant life it also occupies a very important place in woman's autobiography, lord Byron, accepted in Don Juan,

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart; it is woman's whole existence."

In the prologue to, The Revenue Stamp, Amrita Pritam declares that the complete texture of her book is threaded by her personal feeling. She reveals her feminine agony openly in this book and agrees that her other books too depict the same agonized experiences and feelings but with a mask only in autobiography the writer can narrate in confessional mode and also conceal through the reflections of self. Amrita Pritam's self-reflections in the Revenue Stamp are the passages appropriately analyzing how a sensitive woman finds it very difficult to talk about, to write about her love and life in love. Amrita Pritam as a woman felt everything concretely and with stranger sense of being in touch with life,

"Abstraction has no meaning for me. Each entity must take on some sort of shape that I can touch … that in fact, can thrill me with a touch."

She has created this image of an ideal lover in her mental visions in girlhood. She cherished this image with a romantic quest for realizing it in life. It was her dreamy instinct in the beginning and a philosophical vision later on, she recalls,

"A deep dark shadow walked along my side… the face of my ideal lover and mines that imagined growing wiser, stronger, and more mature. The layer deepest down was inspired in which I sought to reveal something luminous in quality."

Her long cherished love was not voiced until the last stage of Sahir's life. It is essential to note here that Amrita despite all her rebellious ideas and bold expression was a very shy woman as a beloved. In the present autobiography, she confesses how she modeled her male protagonists after Sahir and her deep love for him through the female ones. Linda Anderson finds the relationship between woman's autobiography and their apprehension of sexual identity, relating it to their defining 'self' she produced fictional construction that were invariably affected by the writer's inscription within a sexual code.

Amrita Pritam's apprehension of her 'self' within a sexual code impelled her to shield the image and reality of her ideal love that she could fictionalize. At one place, Amrita writes that when Sahir would come to see her he would go on chain smoking and she would intensively long to touch him but

"Could not overcome... My own reservation."

'My own reservation' is an intensely painful revelation of her feminine code of conduct, self-improved not to speak of social compulsions woman herself is effective agent with her own reservation. In her reaction to Sahir's death, she recalls the purity she cherished in their relationship,

"No words care between our friendships. It was a beautiful relationship in silence. The dignity of a blank paper is even there today."

Another lover in her life is Imroz the painter who devoted himself to her care and she finally accepted him as her ultimate man. In her narration she accepts,

"The course my lonesome state has been broken through… by Imroz… in the years that followed I had Imroz he has had only loneliness."

The romantic love of Amrita Pritam's creative and unfathomable sensitivity was a force sustaining her desire for life in the face of her doomed fall. She had accepted the agonizing fact that her dream of love for Sahir would never come true and her compatibility with Imroz as an artist would never cease her respect for him. For this, she offers an explanation, *"By the time I came to write The Revenue Stamp everything was already paired by me in fiction and poetry. I thought I should not report the same. Instead, I incorporated the things I wanted to write could not."*

Amrita Pritam narrates the public side of her life as a writer, part and puts her career in the next of her autobiography her role as a beloved finds her womanly passion irresistible and inevitable. In patriarchy as the dominant system everywhere in the world one expects woman to present herself as being fulfilling the man-oriented roles.

It is very significant to notice that Amrita Pritam did not offer much space rather ignored and the details of her marital life and relationship with her husband. In her narrative, there are brief references to marriage; husband and domestic life and these are very casual. She exploits the autobiographers of freedom of editing and omitting especially about the details of marriage and the husband.

The recuperation of life is terms as 'second reading' in an essay by Gudsoff which he claims to be true than the fact. It can be inferred that Amrita Pritam's desperate omission of the marital life and related details may be because of her search for self, with a new acquired vision and clarity of values. In the Revenue Stamp Amrita claims,

"Like my name my honor has not been departed on others I am proud of my existence. If the earth of Punjab is like a poem, I am the means of the poem."

The explanation of her distancing from the marital memories can be found in Estelle Jelinek's critical observation where she points at the psychological device activating the autobiographer.

"The autobiographical fallacy of self-revelation is demonstrated not only by the similar subjects usually availed in life studies by both sexes but also by the different means of detachment with which they treat the material they do include."

Amrita Pritam's silent about her husband and in-laws in autobiography carries a double sense of the experiences she had in marriage. She creates an impression that she hates him enough

not of mention even his name in her life story. The reasons why she had to marry seems to be rooted in socio- familial compulsions, as she states,

"I had to repay, debt to society… but speaking for myself, I surely feel the weight of that doubt."

She communicates that marriage was a social bondage forced upon all women of her times. The reasons why she got separated from her husband on the other hand, seem to be rooted in personal psychological compulsions.

"Fellow - traveler we are parting company today. This distance between us will grow… However, this distance was not related to any event. It was sometimes personal."

"…I feared the self within would fragment… In addition, I thought I could not retain anymore… I have stolen shelter under this roof."

In Revenue Stamp she does not even mention about her children, their birth, childhood and growth, she mentions that motherhood was an aspired dream for her and recalls her, she longed for a baby until it was born. She mentions her desire that her baby's face should be like her ideal love, imagined by her in Sahir,

"I had read about how a child is shaped by his mother's thoughts and I said to myself if you always have Sahir's face in your mind's eye, he will groom to resemble him. I know that I was merely feeding my frustrations. In this state of crazy love when my baby was born… it was the face of Sahir in my mind."

Autobiography as a self-oriented writing, holds the consciousness of the woman writer's perceptions in life-experience Amrita Pritam in her autobiography came out candidly with her exploration of the private self so clearly that the day's prime-minister Indira Gandhi admired her through a letter,

"It is you and yet there is something universal… most people bury their real selves in some unfathomable depth of their being and just skin the surface of life. It is the privilege of the artist and the poet to be more poignantly aware."

'Revenue Stamp' is a woman's quest for true love & Truth. She did not pay heed to acidic criticism of her society and always listened to her inner voice. Stealthily she moved out of her marital life and moved to a two storied apartment of Delhi, along with her son. She never told untruth to her son also. Once, when her son asked her whether he was Saheer uncle's son, she candidly replied that she wished to be so. Her relationship with Saheer was of a platonic kind. When she found out that Saheer had another friend, she broke up. For six long months she had a nervous break down. Her Pen, poetry and friends rejuvenated her to life.

Her hunt for true love ended with Imroz with whom she passed her remaining life in a very modest financial condition. Thus, surpassing all social stigmas Amrita lived life on her own

terms. It is evident that Sahgal has given more importance to the social, political & cultural background of her times in her life-story. Pritam's life-story is much more emotional & spiritual. Hers is story of a woman in society who is made fun of despite all her talent. Indian society has double standards, where a woman has no right to express her genuine feelings for any male partner.

Amrita expresses anguish at the behavior of women who denied to send their husbands on a tour when she was accompanying them. All her autobiography is full of the references of hurt and pain inflicted either by family or male partners.

As Patricia Specks says, *"Autobiographies, almost by definition make the private public the writer who displays herself in print, claims the authority of individual personal experience asserting the unique knowledge of that unique subject, the self."*

According to Specks, writing autobiography is a dynamic process of recorded choice. It is through the sense of refusal or acceptance, achievement or failure, agony or peace, remorse or fulfillment that a person may think of writing an autobiography. Kamal Arora describes Amrita Pritam as vigor, and a new day, which Amrita Pritam embraces as a child would the draw.

"Exhausting, depleting and inventing all at once. In her autobiography, she has one chapter identified herself with the phoenix, which rises again, and from its own as he's. There is something of the burial ceremony which she saliently seeks each time she closes a particular emotion or chapter of her life. Yet each time fresh hope, in life and light stir the scattered remnants into a frenzy thus creating a new ethos, a new n.''

Amrita suffers the sense of death, burial of emotions and dreams, and yet she does not accept failures, due to her dreary optimism and positive vision. 'A genuine autobiography is both an essay on truth and experiment in being says Goyal and adds that the autobiography of Amrita Pritam has:

"Neither the salacious extroversion of Kamala Das's My Story, nor the intellectual exhibitionism and showmanship of Nirad Chaudhuri's Autobiography of an unknown Indian.''

In the words of H.B. pangarkar,

'There is a combination of arts and truth in her writing. Her writings are truthful and normal getting further artistic touch.'

As Jackie Huggins observes, *"Until there is a real understanding of racism in this country and genuine moves made towards racial equality, many women will not be prepared to talked publicly to audiences about the oppression they suffer through sexism.''*

The women writers have share the common style of drafting similes, which can attract our attention. 'The Revenue stamp' her certain striking ideas and similes, which attract our attention. She calls Imroz her "15 Aug." which is a novel thing. About her sixteenth birthday she writes,

"Like a thief, came "my sixteenth year, stealthy like a prowler in the night stealing through the open windows at the head of my bed."

The identification with phoenix is very appropriate self-knowledge of the poet in Amrita as Goyal observes. The works narrate the self vis-à-vis family, society and politics bearing witness to gendered subordination. Primarily aimed at communicating the subordinated predicament, oppression, suppression and struggle for emancipation, these writings claim the agency, expecting the reader to respond and judge her present. Based on memory, experience and identity, women narrators reproduce the cultural modes of self narrating, simultaneously critiquing the status quo.

Life narratives generate new possibilities of being read. Whichever be the genre, women's life narratives seek affirmation in the correcting mode. Discussion of women's life narratives to explore links between the historical devaluation of women, their writing practices, exclusion of their writing from the canon of traditional autobiographies, cultural biases in defining the selfhood, revising the prevailing concept of autobiography and other perspectives that the paper presenters can think of. Maharani Gayatri Devi in her autobiography 'The Princess Remembers' describes the condition of women in royal families, politics in post independent India, and the condition of Jaipur state and centralization of power by the central government in the regime of Nehru. She gives a detailed account of her childhood spent in Coch Behar, the palatial maintenance and enlarged retinue working under the king, her shooting of tigers, her early courtship with Jai, her study approved and all the and her life after marriage at Jaipur. Though Gayatri Devi never criticizes the condition of women in palace, as she lived a very free life despite of veil system prevalent in the palace. She is the third wife of Jai and in this way her story carries with her the stories of two other wives of jai who were deprived of their marital life after her arrival in the palace. Her story reveals how women are exploited and are subordinate to their husbands in palaces. Maharani's mother also never married for second time though she was widowed at a very early age. Women in pre independence era were not free to oppose the dictates of the males and had to obey the rules and regulations of society and caste, however educated they may be.

Shobhaa De's personality is hypocritical in nature as her thoughts are not vindicated by her actions. We find her a split personality, torn between 'self' and 'society'. Shobhaa De is not a force to awaken women socially and culturally. She makes writing a weapon to guide the women of new India how to brave challenges in life. She shows one sided fade picture of the society, which is the glamour world. Her story is the story of thousands of women who are attracted towards glamour world, but all of them are not lucky to find Nirahari. She carries with herself stories of many other women of Bollywood who have to struggle lifelong.

Shobhaa De brings to surface the stigma attached to the birth of a girl child. Always secondary preference is given to the girl-child. When Shobhaa was born to her parents, the wives of Rao Saheb's peons delivered boys and they had an upper hand over their master. Mr. Rao was a special magistrate but as the father of three daughters his status was lowered.

'Selective Memory - Stories from my Life' is her eleventh work, an autobiography, since 1989. It seems selected from the columns she has written over the years, but the resemblance goes only as far as the early conversational style of writing, for the book is the story of how Mumbai created the celebrity writer, she has once said,

"We feasted on each other, Bombay and I. I am a byproduct of this city."

Considering Shobhaa De's 'Selective Memory' as a bold autobiography, we feel that hers is a life larger than sea. Born in a middle class Maharashtrian Brahmin family of the magistrate of Satara Rao Saheb in 1948. Shobhaa De's birth was not much welcomed by the women of the family. Her mother & grandmother expected her to be a second son of the family.

However, her father rejoiced her birth and considered Shobhaa as the luckiest child of the family. After her birth her father was appointed as a government official in Delhi. De had a much pampered humpty-dumpty childhood. Later on her father was again transferred to Mumbai. Right from her childhood De and her siblings were supposed to follow several codes of conduct prescribed by her father. In the last few chapters of her life -story, De maintains that 'being economical' was one of the middle class attitudes she had imbibed.

When De had chosen her career in modeling at the age of eighteen, her father did not approve it. Her mother silently supported her. Her life story perfectly depicts her mental conflict. She pursued her career & did not surrender to her father's wishes. She remained a super model for five years and changed the career when Mr. Nari Hira appointed her as the editor of Stardust. Though the public image of De is that of a high society jinks. She is at bottom a self-made middle class woman with a degree in human psychology & ready to break all the barriers that come her way.

As they shared the same room, it was she who introduced her elder sisters to pop-music, smoking, beer drinking, western dancing trendy hair styles, waxing hair, high hills, mascara, Hollywood magazines, racy books etc. She emerged as a national athlete in running, which was the only thing where she was allowed to flower, but at the same time she is completely indifferent to the victories she had achieved at that age and turns blank about those victorious moments, without any kind of nostalgia. After her graduation in Psychology and Sociology, her father wanted her to get through the Civil Service Examinations, but her luck was turning her to some other direction. These days when she is asked, "Whether she was a rebel", she answers,

"May be I didn't conform to norms laid down by those in authority. But I was not a rude difficult child. Not especially. I did not set out to break rules or shock anybody; I did what came naturally to me without worrying too much about the consequences."

Her siblings were in sharp contrast to her, they were the trophy students in schools and colleges and unlike De they pursued worthy jobs. De was a well read and well informed student at the college. Her college life in Bombay, with Xavier's led her to modeling, which was completely out of her parent's knowledge and consent, then she goes on talking about other models and their attitude, totally in contrast to her tom boyish personality and without forgetting to mention the modeling equipment's in those days, which displays her sense of humor, she laughs at herself, especially on her looks, and suddenly after spending five years in the profession, she opted for copywriting, that too was an accident, her senior at Xavier's was to be on her pregnancy leave and Shobhaa got to work in her place at the Creative Unit. She describes the place and incident exactly in the manner it had happened and out of nowhere her friend asked her, "Can you write?", "of course" was the answer, but it was something else than what she thought she was to write, later instead of quitting, she thought she should try, description is again lively and effective, and it was 'bye'.

Nari Hira, her boss was arrogant and rude but she still stayed on, perhaps because this profession was accepted by her parents as compared to the modeling. After spending time with the Creative Unit, she thought of leaving it too and expressed her mind to the boss, but luck was offering her 'Stardust '- magazine writing, that was her solo venture. Although she knew nothing of the magazine writing and Bollywood, whom she's to write about, but she did it enthusiastically, just because, at Stardust she was on her own, no Nari Hira was breathing down her nose.

'Celebrity' was sold to meet the debts. The next issue in her autobiography is the 'In' and 'Out' of celebrity hood. She says,

"The fact that a face appears more than five times in a publication or on Television is a sufficient qualification to dub him or her a 'Celebrity'."

It reaches to the height of emotions, and effectiveness when she narrates the account of her mother's ill health, which led to her death. The incident of 'Delhi Darbaar Chicken' is truly poignant, her description of her father's condition as a widower, and her ill manners with her mother, when she was alive, makes the readers cry sympathetic. This is the chapter where she expresses her guilt and pain. De was holidaying with her family, and her other siblings were also busy with their own lives; no one was there except her father when her mother died. It's only towards the extreme end of her autobiography that she mentions her divorce, second marriage and children. Its all about how she met Dilip De and the coping up of children with new family and new environment. The chronology of her personal life, or the lack of it, is somewhat confusing, her being Mrs. Khilachand just slips in, its when she mentions her children in the early chapters, that one gets to know that she is married and now a mother. Even the photographs given in the middle of the book does not contain any image of her first

husband, Mr. Khilachand, atthat moment it seems that Shobhaa De has become a bit partial, or it's evident that she is happy with her recent family and does not want to look back.

In this context, the following words of Gerda Lerner on women's predicament are worth quoting:

"Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male centered [sic] terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked questions of history, which are inappropriate to women."

Shobhaa De's keen surveillance of woman's condition in the post- modern world explores the turbulent territory of women's psyche with identity crisis. She finds that the educated urban woman in India believes change in her concept of life towards family and society. This belief later brings out internal and outer conflicts and moral dilemmas affecting her psychic conditions. She always fights against the cultural barriers, which curb her freedom to enjoy her own life. The urban woman does not want to be docile spouse to her male partner. When her views are not respected in the name of marriage, she is ready to challenge men without any fear and confusion.

Shobhaa De depicts modern, educated, career-oriented upper class women who are delicate to eternal changing times and situations. Her women are aware of cultural shortcomings to which they are subjected to in this patriarchal society. They rebel against their men seeking considerable identity and unlimited freedom. They are trapped in a conflict between personal aspirations and social demands. Her women do not accept to be labeled as objects of gratification. They challenge their victimization and find a solace redefining their own morals. Their idea of freedom is borrowed from the west because the urban woman in India today is matched with the woman from the west. They refuse to become a male appendix and want to have a significant role in society.

Shobhaa De through her novels presented issues of women mainly urban, middle and affluent classes. In her memoir, she has given picture of exploitation of models and film personalities in the glamour world.

She has witnessed the celebrity herself, knows in both print, and film industry the oppression systems operated against women. She has at home front, fortunately, very sound and healthy environment for her personal growth, but she could sense the problems of upper and affluent classes.

De advises to utilize our resources in the best manner and not follow anything blindly. One should be proud of oneself. She solicits us to know our own selves and work efficiently. It is in the hands of would be mothers to create a sharper, stronger and brighter India. We are proud to be Indian women. We have not only surpassed our male counterparts but also our

western counterparts. De's life-story is a sparkling records of what an ordinary but determined Indian woman can do.

Conflict is one the most significant factors of autobiography. Shoba De notes how her ideology was much in conflict with that of parent's. Her father disapproved of her career of modeling. She pursued modeling career as a college student. She thought that, it would give her some pocket money and a sense of independence.

"For a woman, a book in progress is like a secret lover she has to hide from her family. Steal time to go back to. Dream about. Luxuriate in. Fantasize about. It's guilty secret she can't share with anybody. There is sense of regret – you can't make love to a book or talk to it. And yet the secret thrill of each encounter provides a high. The book makes you feel desirable, sexy, beautiful, interesting. It's better than the best sex."

According to D. G. Naik: *"Certain autobiographies enable us to know the history of certain periods in a far better way than the actual books of history."*

Shoba De has affluently portrayed the middle-class Maharashtrian families of her times.

Kamala Das, the greatest woman poet in contemporary Indian English literature, displays feminist ethos in her autobiography 'My Story' (1996). As she writes in 'My Story':

"Poets die many times their deaths. They die especially repeatedly in the obituaries. They live again, so they not when their poems are printed after their deaths."

Dr. Joya Chakravarty observed that 'My Story' is a manifestation of Das' poems. It is difficult to judge whether Das has derived her life-story from her poems or vice-versa. Das' poetry is spontaneous, straightforward and simple. Nevertheless it has an alert and inquisitive approach to life.

Kamala Das is an iconoclast who has asserted her identity and the universal experience of self, love-despair, anguish, failure and disgust in her autobiography against the traditional mode of gender manifestation apprehended through a feminine Indian awareness.

Kamala Das belongs to the first generation of modern English writers who evolved a new poetics for themselves and made a new start both in theme and technique around the 1960s. The first phase of Indo-Anglican poetry ended in the 1950s. To the poets of this period the spirit of modernism was almost alien. Their main preoccupation was the spirit of nationalism and the war of independence, partition of country. Kamala Das is one of the most powerful voices of this post-colonial era. Even in Kamala Das' poetry we find the best expression of feminine sensibility, its suppression in a male dominated society. Her autobiography is bearing best parts of her poems and most painful and pessimistic poems are autobiographical in tone. Her poetry is confessional and auto-biographical to a great extent, but at times she universalizes what is personal. In her autobiography She rebels against the conventional

restraints of society which are meant to exploit women in this man made world. She challenges the accepted notions of the female and redraft general opinion of the feminine mystique. She shows the passion of an undaunted rebel, not to retreat and not to fail. The intensity and eloquence of her life and poetic accomplishment have dumbfounded the male-chauvinists and have left her female counterparts in soaring spirits not only inside the social, cultural and religious setup but also outside it. That is why her life story makes a fascinating study in the crushing indictment of the suppressive prescriptions against the freedom, dignity and respectful living of women, especially in Indian society. She confirms our convictions that socio-cultural and socio-religious restrictions on women have robbed them of all their potentialities, leaving them not only physically and mentally handicapped but also psychological wrecks age after age.

In her autobiography Kamala Das voices her inner privacy. She makes her femininity a potent vehicle against male supremacy. Dr. Shubha remarks that as a child Kamala was very ordinary in her looks. At the tender age of nine, she was made conscious of her dark complexion. Her grandmother rubbed raw turmeric all over her body before the oil bath. Her father found her to be too rustic for his likings. So Kamala was admitted to a boarding school run by the German catholic nuns. Kamala was given proper education but her father was quite orthodox. At the age of fifteen, Kamala was forced to marry a person double her age. She comments,

"I was a burden and a responsibility, neither my parents nor my grandmother could put up with for long. Therefore, with the blessings of all, our marriage was fixed.''

Dr. Shubha Tiwari points out that the girl's childhood was scaled with an unhappy marriage. There was no one to share her misery and pain. In such circumstances she took to writing. Soon her poems were accepted by the journal P.E.N.

Kamala Das as a creative artist progressively involves herself into the modem fundamentals of thought and action: skepticism, opposition, and criticism. Ever since Frederick Nietzsche envisaged these three characteristic properties of modem thought and action, many revolutionary ideologies like the leftist philosophy and the feminist revolution in the European countries came to the forefront. Kamala Das successfully poetizes the modem Indian feminine psyche's violence and rebellion in accordance with the celebrities of the twentieth century Western women's liberation movement, like Simone De Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf. Being an Indian, Das progressively introduces the Indian woman's predicament by taking into consideration four prominent aspects differentiating women: biological, linguistic, psychoanalytic, and cultural. Her sensibility is filled with agonizing circumstances of feminine predicament and the resultant anxiety. This anxiety and anger eventually transform into violent poetic outcries which are directed towards a society that constantly and continuously cold-shouldered the feminine sensibilities, and violated the freedoms and aspirations of women. In the context of modem India hers is a unique poetic innovation and experiment of superimposing the violent and revolutionary ideas of the

Western women's liberation movement upon the Asian women's world of rigid and unbending traditions.

Kamala Das, in fact, is concerned with the exclusive problems faced by women in general in the context of the traditional life-giving institutions. When it comes to the question of taking issues and conducting a quarrel with man and his masculine preoccupations, Kamala Das is certainly justified in her violent fury against the autocratic manner in which man behaves in his relations both with woman and with nature. Needless to say, certain amount of self-centeredness, hypocrisy, envy, and hatred entered into the ego-centric province of man, and it is very difficult to say since when he started becoming a grudging rival of the very essence of femininity.

As a matter of safe conjecture, it is Renaissance man duly appended with egocentric individualism that progressively contributed for a kind of authoritarian manner of taking decisions and executing them. This authoritarian manner of man reached its pinnacle towards the end of the nineteenth century. This male-centered authoritarian dogma had to be met with opposition and criticism. The feminist cause itself emerged as a rival critical social phenomenon and took the form of a furious liberation movement. Kamala Das partakes herself in this process of liberating women by way of openly' declaring her grievances and concerns about the self centered nature of man in being an authority for himself without analytically understanding the relative importance and prerogatives of woman as a person and as a social being.

Very often Das prominently verges upon making a sort of concerned confessional declarations about the superior credentials of woman in nature and about the equal credentials of hers in the matters concerning social and cultural contexts of existence. Das prominently believes that in nature's strict parameters femininity occupies a very important place of superiority because nature has entrusted woman with greater responsibilities and with higher credentials in evolution in awarding her the status of an essential base. So her grievance is based on the fact that this supremacy of woman was never allowed to take the form or a culture by man and his crushing tendencies of authoritarianism. This subdued existence breeds in woman a typical manner opposition to all that goes in the society in the name of traditions. Kamala Das enhances this feminist feud by way of poetically expressing the true texts and contexts of Indian woman and her suffering because of the authoritarian onslaughts of the post-Renaissance man. Her entire autobiography has since been an evidence of her unique personal temper and temperament. Kamala Das is of the opinion that given the opportunity of freedom and transparency in thought and action, Indian woman too can come out of the seemingly unassertive and submissive calm and quietude of her world, and go hand in hand with her Western counterparts in aspiring and exacting for a dignified status for women rather than putting up with the humiliations of sexual exploitations and subservience that they undergo in the Indian social milieu. What she violently pleads for is a possible understanding between man and woman as equally interdependent personalities struggling to measure each other's personality mutually in an atmosphere of what the Christian fathers call agape or Christ-like charity. The modern mechanized and industrial life-styles do not allow a

place for that agape. So her real rebellion is against the modem 'botched culture' which does not allow interpersonal free and frank transparency in the affairs concerning the mutual joys and sublimations of man and woman as partners in life. The categorical distinction and differentiation between man and woman as naturalistic creatures put man as a self-serving conservative agent, serving his own purposes and cold- shouldering his feminine counterpart into a state of negligence and unwanted state.

Generations of traditions and conventions verbally dubbed women in a state of passivity and, in course of time, quite innocuously and ungrudgingly women reconciled to their so-called state of passivity, and gradually got conditioned to the strategically proposed systems and traditions. Justifying Das' concerns as a feminist poet, K. Satchidanandan rightly observes:

"She [Das] refuses to glorify the historical past. ... She rejects the patriarchal value system that is based on egoism, greed for power, expansionism, hero-cult, violence, war, mindless exploitation of man and nature, the misuse of intelligence and the supremacy of reason and theory over sensitiveness and experience."

At the same time, she also fervently pleads for recognition of the Uniqueness of woman as a compassionate entity in a given society. This plea for recognition of woman's uniqueness, since she proposes to the same in most clear terms added with a sense of emotional fury, often provokes in the readers a sort of immediate initial response of discord. In her autobiography she simultaneously provides a rational and realistic proposition concerning the state and status of women in the Indian system; and, after a calm and cool thinking, the readers whole-heartedly consent and conform themselves to what she says as something quite sensible, even laudable.

Kamala Das' real rebellion is against a culture that has instituted every socially interactive counter on the inherent principle of gender humanity, and conducts her poetic activity in such a manner that she would gain for herself the honorific credentials of being a citizen of the world. Her fight on behalf of women is not at all narrowed down to the Indian context alone. In the whole world, the manner in which women are discriminated and sidelined for centuries together pained her a lot.

Describing her school life she mentions feelings of humiliation at dark skin at home as well as at school.

“I wondered why I was born to Indian parents instead of a white couple, who may have been proud of my verses.’’

It is here that she painfully realizes her loss of identity. She is not only compelled by the civilization and its patriarchal agents to wear the garbs of many roles, but is also not allowed to express her dissent over this imposition ('I must act the role I Of happy woman I Happy wife'). Her husband’s treatment is fatherly with her, as he is twice her age.

She could never get satisfaction of love from him. Hers is a story of every Indian girl who is never asked her opinion nor is allowed to choose life partner of her own choice.

Divorce is a stigma for a girl in India. She has to continue despite of dissatisfaction. Das freely borrows most of the forward-looking ideas concerning women's liberation from the European avant-garde feminist writers like Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf. In spite of the fact that her temperament tilts towards the liberation of women, her natural credentials is because of her abundant love for life, liberty, and progress. In fact it is these factors along with her longing for happiness and joy that render her into a rebel when she finds that the heartless social mills of religion, tradition, morality and conventions ruthlessly crush the genuine naturalistic credentials of feminine supremacies. The urgency that pervades over her life story springs from the firm belief that life is only one, and that is meant to be much happier.

Kamala Das had an urgency to speak out her mind freely and frankly. As far as what Kamala Das wants to assert through her story is concerned, she comes very near to the observations made by Western feminist liberators about the position of women in society. In the articulation of feminist concerns through literary aesthetic dimensions, thus, Kamala Das is not a beginner, but an Oriental linkage in the train of such strong European women writers as Virginia Woolf and Elaine Showalter and such astounding feminist confessional poets as Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath of America. A brief look at the evolution of women's movement into a profound aesthetic formula of exacting feminine concerns, therefore, instantly becomes pertinent here.

With Kamala Das, we have a writer expressing the physical instincts of a woman Persona in very bold and assertive manner for the first time in the history of Indian English autobiographies.

Moreover, while searching her body she also searches her inner self. In her case, the physical experience leads her to the spiritual realization. Just like Pritam, married at a very tender age to a man double her age, Kamala was unable to receive the conjugal bliss. However, because of social disapproval she did not take a divorce. Shifting from one Metro to another with an Indian who was a British official, Kamala could not build up a compact relationship. Out of their arid union she became a mother of three sons but her relationship with her hubby never turned out to be intimate. Kamala’s story is an irony on the mindset of Indians when a woman is wailing for her demon lover but the lover changes love as garments.

Regarding, descriptions of the experiences both Amrita Pritam and Kamala Das were equally powerful writers. Both were sufferers at the time of partition, when the whole country was riot-torn. As their creative ability grew expression to their inner thoughts, their autobiographies reveal their minds. They are proud to be women and are concerned with articulating what womanhood means.

In a way, Kamala Das deconstructs the patriarchal structures by assassinating or violating the cannons framed by the society. Kamala Das wants to delineate all the events and situations that she comes across; and she shows them to the reader without any patience. She, as a feminist, confronts inconvenient restrictions on the fair sex and draws a new level of reference, an entirely different structural framework for women writing. As all feminists, call for a new language. Kamala Das also joins the slogan that would assist in expressing female experiences. Elaine Showalter explains the programs thus:

"The program of Genocritics is to construct a female framework for the analysis of woman's literature to develop new models on the study of female experience rather than adopt male models and stories.''

Kamala Das' revelation of her own passions in the form of her own autobiography is unique and unprecedented in the genre of feminist's writings in Indian writings in English literature. Such an effort by a woman without by passing or belittling individual experiences would help women out new world of female space. Indeed, the works of Kamala Das have influenced many feminists' writers writing in the post-colonial period particularly in the context of India. Her efforts to carve out a new world of female space are of immense viability taking into consideration the subaltern structures of family hierarchy where women often occupied a position of prime importance. In Marathi literature, Urmila Pawar has attempted such a challenge in her memoir of Dalit presentations and caste weaknesses and ignorance of world development. Laxmi Bai Tilak in her autobiography also revealed the conversion of her husband Narayan Waman Tilak as well as her own after following his footsteps to remove the caste barriers in the country and the matters relating to blind faith. When a friend asked Tilak as Laxmibai writes,

"If you become a Christian, will your deep devotion to the motherland still be same? Would you still love us?''

Tilak's answer to this has become famous, *"Know that I shall love everyone, a nationalist am I, my brother, and I will give my life; I shall pine and mil- every one of you, my friend, lay down my life for my country.''*

Nayantara Sahgal is second woman from the Nehru family who used the autobiographical form of writing. She is novelist and columnist of great repute. She has written two autobiographies 'Prison and Chocolate Cake' (1954), and 'From Fear Set Free' (1962). Sahgal considers writing as an invaluable aid has great therapeutic cathartic function of literature.

Prison and Chocolate Cake is full of reminiscences from the family record, with emphasis on the political life of the family at Anand Bhawan in Allahabad. William Walsh,

"Thinks that it is a significant trend, started by a woman that of bringing politics in her works. Nayantara Sahgal's writings have qualities of dashing journalistic prose, which exhibits her interest in the minute details of the political life."

Prison and Chocolate Cake is like going behind the scenes of the freedom movement. There is a narrator, in this case Nayantara Sahgal. Jawaharlal's niece, who is closely associated with the main action but is not a direct participant, There are larger than life heroes who shape larger than life-events in this case the Pandit Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Vijya Laxmi Pandit etc.

She has narrated Mahatma Gandhi's assassination in 1948. There is the sense of history being relived but in different form. She gives an excellent account of an insider's history of the Nehru family from the time that Sahgal starts observing her life to Gandhi's assassination. There is a present history and journey both away from freedom movement a chronicle of Sahgal's own growth from a precocious child to a wise young woman. Right from her days at Woodstock school, she has been overwhelmed by the tumultuous events before partition when many of her family members suffered at the hands of British dominance. Prison and Cake is a memoir, both heartrending when it speaks of the death of her father or the repeated visits of her mother Vijya Laxmi to prison. As she writes,

"I wrote Prison and Cake because I didn't want the special magic of that time to disappear without a trace. I also felt I owed it to my three parents- the third being my uncle, Jawaharlal Nehru, to recapture this whole experience and keep it alive, rather than just let it become an event in a history book. For readers today, especially the young, it is remembering the love and laughter and high ideals that went into my parent's contribution to the Non-violent fight for freedom."

Sahgal's another autobiography from fear set free is a sequel to the first one. It unravels Ghandhian influence on the writer. Here, Sahgal's personal experience is emphasized more than the political activities. The core of both the books is personal experience through which the writer reaches for the liberation of her spirit. The first autobiography was not written with a view to publish and the writer had or maintained records. Hence, the chronological order has not been maintained. Nayantara's autobiography gives us a glimpse of women of higher class before independence. Despite all comforts in life she became a victim of male ego and her first marriage was a failure. 'From Fear Set Free' does not openly condemn Sahgal's married life. However she often expresses a fear of being confined to a particular way of life. By traditional standards she should have been happy with the material comforts around her, but the lack of something as vital as oxygen suffocated her. At last, Sahgal left her husband and found the courage to live separately in a flat found by E.N. Mangat Rai.

She was afraid of social upheaval and the expectations of growing children but desire of 'reaching for the stars' finally gave her courage. Gradually, People accepted her in this novel situation. She takes pride that at least people of India did not exhibit condemnation. This experience of hers is opposite to that of amrita pritam, Kamala Das and Shobhaa De, who all

faced social criticism at the question of extra marital relations or second marriage. It may be because of class difference between them.

Apart from her life-history. Sahgal's life-narratives are the true records of Indian freedom struggle. As an elite class member Sahgal never lacked material comforts but she always insisted for inner freedom. Whether it is a life of human being or that of a Nation Sahgal seems to have pursued the path of fearlessness and 'Satya' preached by Gandhi.

In fact, some view the genre as a 'female gendered act that exposes the duplicity of patriarchy and the sub-human, subaltern status accorded to women in male dominated societies. Saranjeet Shan in her autobiography 'In My Own Name' (1991) writes, *"My book is merely a narration of the tragic events of bright young girl's life; life that was transformed indeed cut short because of the orthodox marriage. It is a statement of agony for hundreds of girls who go through the same trauma even today.''*

Another such life-story narrating a conflict-habituated childhood is 'Daughter's Daughter (1993) by Mrinal Pande. It is a book about growing up as a girl .Mrinal also faced gender discrimination in her early childhood days. In the preface of the book Pande writes,

"I know, even as I write this, girls are being, tortured and burnt for dowry…no, survival is not easier for our girls today than it was for us.''

The same fate of Asian women is faced by Saranjeet Shan in her autobiography 'In My Own Name' (1991) she writes,

"My book is merely a narration of the tragic events of bright young girl's life; life that was transformed indeed cut short because of the orthodox marriage. It is a statement of agony for hundreds of girls who go through the same trauma even today.''

Sahgal ponders over life and its problems. In the very beginning of her life story Sahgal is quite convinced about the cultural distance between herself and her partner. She confesses:

"Had my marriage been arranged, I should not have married Gautam. We should in that case, have married partners from our own province and caste... The need for a common background is particularly significant in a country where provincial differences range over dress, food, language and customs."

In From Fear Set Free Sahgal does not directly express her feeling of suffocation in her marriage life. However she often expresses some kind of fear and being habituated to the monotony of life. While caught in the trap of her confusion, she also discussed her confusion related to marriage with her Mamu and he advocated a sense of freedom in every area of life:

"It is possible to do many things once fear has been shed... Not conquered, not overcome, merely discarded like a restricting garment so that the body can breathe unimpeded."

Sahgal's life story expresses her inner life as a reflection of outward movement of India's freedom struggle. Her autobiographical works truly express the tone and temper of her Era. Hence we feel that they are the true records of 20th century India & further. She has reflected India with all her cultural diversity.

In brief prologue to The Revenue Stamp, Amrita Pritam shot back,

"Whatever happened in my life happened between the layers of thought that found their way into novels and poems. What was left? Still, I thought I might write a few lines – something to complete the account book of my life and at the end, seal it with this revenue stamp as it were or am I with this revenue stamp setting a seal to my novels and poems… my entire, literary work…''

Kamala Das gives an outlet to common Indian woman's position:

"Often, I toyed with the idea of drowning myself to get rid of my loneliness which is not unique in any way, is natural to all. I wanted to find rest in the sea and an escape from involvement."

Similarly, Kamala narrates in her memoir background of her great Nalpat house and her childhood days. Das memoir represents her pain for love, which she sought from her marital life. She has started her poetry writing from the age of nine under the family influence.

Jhamak Ghimari, poet & writer from Nepal though a special child since her childhood, has also faced the similar condition indiscrimination in Nepali milieu. With the help of her feet she has written her autobiography 'A Flower in the Midst of Thrones'.

"At times when I turn those pages of life and look over again and again. And it's but natured because it appears that I was dropped out of my mother's womb along with many unlucky fate lives written off over (my forehead)".

When she was born her birth was regretted by the members of her family. She even wonders whether she was living the life of an animal or human being. The only difference between her and an animal life was the she could get cooked rice to eat. Her life was without any sensitivity, pain, color or love. She thinks this life as punishment of the sins committed during her pervious birth.

"There was deep discrimination between son and daughters in my family, as there was a lot of gender discrimination in society in general at that time. Both of my parents were literate and the main source of income was from my father's work. Being a handicapped daughter, I was not well cared for by my parents and I often felt people treated me more like an animal. As a child I received a lot of care and love from my grandma, but sadly she died when I was only five years old. My grandma passing away meant that I had to learn to eat by using my

feet, as there was nobody there to help me eat. My parents were not too happy because I was born to them as a handicapped daughter, so they didn't like to take care of me very well.

I spent my childhood striving to get my basic rights and faced great difficulty. As I was disabled I could only eat and go to the toilet with the help of others so you could say that my childhood life was full of struggle. I was not able to speak with others to express my feelings and say what I needed, and this left me totally dependent upon others. I passed most of my childhood playing with mud and rock particles that were nearby, whilst at the same time my sister used to go school. My mother and grandmother used to work on a farm. They did not have time to take care of me, and I was left to excrete in my clothes. At the age of seven, my playing activities began to differ. I tried to play by using my toes to write on mud. I began to dream about learning to read and write, but I didn't have the opportunity. When I saw my sister going to school, it made me really want to go too."

She thinks herself to be cheated by destiny. The only person was contact with her was her grandmother. Often, she was cursed in her childhood because the family wanted the first born to be a son.

In Nepali society, a women's birth without a son is meaningless. Most of the times the Jhamak was burning with jealousy because her younger brother was paid more attention. She was also neglected by her grandmother. She was even not allowed to play and was bitten many times by her grandmother. The clothes she used to wear were torn. Because of her scrawl on belly she was not even provided the right to get education. Younger sister was taught and sitting at a distance, she educated herself by writing on the floor with wet foot fingers. The earth was her exercise book. Even for this self-learning she was scolded by her father and beaten for disturbing her sister. They were of the opinion that being a handicapped child her study was useless. Often they would remark, "Why do you disturb your younger sister, she is reading and writing. You get out."

She even had thought many times that the only outlet from this torture was her demise. The same was the opinion of her parents. They wanted her to die.

People use to regard her as a symbol of voicelessness and immobility. Her physical handicap was also a great hurdle to get respect in her life. Society thought her fit to be shut in a room and be fed like cattle.

When she got adolescent age, she had problem to cover her body and shave her tender skin was rubbed against the stones and her skin was exposed. She was even teased by the on lookers and at a very early stage. She also learnt at the very time to oppose, react and self-defend. She hurled stones on the persons looking at her. All of them receded and what taken aback.

Though she had learnt reading and writing even than she was not provided access to books and pens. She was scolded when she demanded books and even was threatened to be hit with

stick. Her sister Meena stealthily brought her books and quenched her thirst for knowledge. Jhamak was not even allowed to spend her own pocket money to buy books.

Nepali Society is so conventional and traditional that girls are not called with their proper name. Jhamak was always addressed as Thule. She was not called by her first name. Her name was a dream for her. To be called with her proper name was day dream for her. Often, she was addressed by people. She was asked whether she was male or female and she replied she was a human being. She thought inside her heart that I would like to make myself known by the simple name of Jhamak Ghimari., if you please. Because this is the only name that is endearing to me.

“It was this that inspired me to begin to write letters in the mud with my toes.” Her parents would put shoes on my feet to keep me out of the mud, but they didn’t realize that by putting shoes on my feet they were preventing me from learning, as the shoes stopped me using my toes. The shoes took away my independence. She used to try to tear them off by rubbing them in the soil and the mud. She remember that she used to be able to write on the ground in the open areas in the early morning with the help of the dew. After that she started writing in my sister’s notebooks that she used to leave at home. During that time my father used to say that there was no point in educating me, and he used to always separate me from my sister because he thought she would disturb my sister's environment for education. But she never stopped trying to learn and read internally by my heart. However, when she did new things, my father would punish me. She was often called names like snake as she used to have to crawl about. She always felt like she was a great burden on my family and she would pray to god that she would die.

Her major sources of inspirations were the open earth, the sky, and also her thin and lean toes which had worked as pens and pencils. Those negative behaviors and habits of her parents towards her fully inspired her to do something in her life. Her keen interest in learning and her success as a writer have further inspired her to learn more and work harder. Art and Literature always attracted her and She can never get away from them. She continuously tried to work with Art and Literature. She feel that the difficulties She faced and scarcities She experienced have all helped me become successful today. Her communication tools were my feet and toes and they became as necessary to her as internal organs. She started writing poems and articles using her toes, and this gained the attention of the staff working at the Kantipur Daily. The local politician, Govinda Raj Bhattrai, inspired her to write literature for publication.

Being a woman she has to undergo the cycle of nature in the form of menstruation and Nepali society women are not allowed to do any work during those five days and lead a life seclusion. She even was not allowed to share her food with others. She had to sleep in a separate room and nobody was allowed to enter in the room. Her brother was not allowed to even communicate with her. It was thought that his life would be curtailed if she touched him. She was even not supposed to see the sun and rebelling against the custom she saw the sun to her hearts content. After her, sister Meena also faced this same ordeal. She had to

undergo strict discipline. Jhamak recalls that she fought her own battle, in her own manner. Even if no one gave her company, her tears, pains and thoughts were enough support for her. The dream of a coming beautiful life made her forget all her pains, troubles and tribulations. She never ceased the dream of a beautiful life.

Sometimes Jhamak also became a victim of sympathy and false promises made by people around. The friends of her father who came home, to feast with him in company of liquor, would often assure her to publicize her activities but they didn't do anything. Often, they spoke against her to her father, indicating that he was unfortunate to be cursed with such a daughter. She was so infuriated that she wanted to slap on their cheeks but she was afraid of her father. She was provided colors, papers by her father's friend to draw pictures and portraits but her paintings were never sent abroad, as promised by them.

A turning point came in the life of Jhamak when she entered the world of books. The passion for book increased her knowledge as well as self-confidence. Dreams & Novels not only inspired her but also entertain her. She was free in the world of imagination. She imagined herself to be a part of those dreams. Her thirst and hunger for knowledge was satiated by books. She started writing articles and poems, and in this way, she gave vent to her paints, pangs, wounds and injuries through her writings. Her writings fascinated the people visiting her house and they admired her and she realized her life to be worthy and meaningful. Respect and faith for her aroused in the hearts of people and her fame made people throng around her. Her weakness became her power. It was surprising thing for people that a girl was writing with her toes. She started spreading her wings in the form of literature.

At the life of stage also some educated and low-level persons would discourage her from writing and advised her to make her living by sewing clothes or scrolling breads. Sometime even they cursed her to write and die. Her desire to be independent nourished her even during the severe storms of her life. She did not want to be burden on others. Jhamak became a renowned figure in the world around since the publications of the great anthologies.

Jhamak regrets the attitude of the society for disabled people (especially women) like her. She thinks herself to be stronger than people think of her.

Jhamak represents the women folk in Nepali society where barriers are placed to restrain them with in the lines of limitations drawn by anyone. Jhamak proved herself above these limitations and became free and independent. She was even threatened to be killed in the starting of her carrier. She was formidable enough to accept the challenge and did not undergo any limitations.

Jhamak's creation is different from other autobiographies of her time. She expresses her frustrations, rebellion, disgust, depression, envy and anger. She has expressed all these emotions very minutely. The atmosphere she is surrounded is full of superstition, narrow mindedness, poverty and deprivation. Her determination helped her to come out of the fog of disbelief and face the inner light with the power of her determination. She challenges the

discrimination in this world, fought it and rebelled against it. Hers is a story of lesson to the society how to treat children of biological difference. She has hit out against gender discrimination and opens the door to a new equalitarian consciousness. The fire of the volcano seething inside her has captured the society all around. She challenges the roots of the religion which provokes inequality. Her book is becoming the identity of Nepal. She inspires women to continue their struggle and smile amidst tears. She gives a message to the society that justice is possible only if every human being is treated with love affection and respect.

Taslima Nasrin, the famous Bangladeshi poet and writer as raised a voice against the subordination of women and their poor condition in Bangla society through her autobiography written in various parts. They are bearing the titles My Girlhood, Wildwind, Those Dark Days, I am not Ok but you stay well my beloved homeland, nothing is there and Nirvasan.

Her autobiography orchestrates the subordination of the majority of women and attitude of men against them. In Bangladeshi culture the concept of gender rolls prevents women from becoming self-reliant. Men consider them inferior in patriarchal as well as post-colonial society of Bangladesh Female equality is a day dream and violence and injustice against women defers the progress of half the population.

Taslima stepped out of the social bounds and so became a target of misrepresentation by Maulvies. She was declared a traitor to the state and religion. In her autobiography Taslima has given an outlet to the position of women in her community. The discomfort and fear faced by her in her childhood asserts the position of girls and the reason of their backwardness. Taslima mentions her childhood days. The migration of the family in the year of war is not less than a nightmare. Taslima is horrorstricken while mentioning her flight from her village to the house of their distant relatives. Men had entered her house and ransacked all the household, things and she was lying flat on the floor. Ma's cash and Grandma's gold in the basket was stolen. All these reminiscences were deep rooted in her childhood memories.

Though Taslima was born after two sons and was dear to her parents yet the girls' birth was not a welcome sign in her community. Her mother was narrowly saved at the time of her birth. At a very tender age she had undergone and understood the suffering of a women as a wife when husband is not loyal to the wife. She is told by her mother that her father had fallen in love with Razia Bagem. Her mother's only fault was her being less beautiful. When her mother demanded to study further then her Baba replied, "Your job is to raise your children and stay at home". He told Ma in no uncertain terms "And to take care of your husband. There's no need for a girl to think of education." Her father was a lusty person, and he did not even spare the maids who worked in the house.

Nasrin mentions pathetically that women in her family were totally powerless. Even the children of her did not obey her and ignored simplest of her wishes. Whenever they had any

demand, they made to father. They had understood where the power center in the family structure lay. She states the position of women in the traditional south Asian family.

Her mother returned to religion when ignored at home. In religion, her condition was even worse. There, women had to be fed on the leftover of the Pir. Edul, her mother used to take things from home stealthily to help the Pir. Taslima was forced even to read scripture five times a day and to follow the rules of the religion as a grown up. At a very tender age Taslima had to face the unquiet in the house in the firm row between the mother & father. Mother was totally religious and traditional and father was totally scientific and modern. Nasrin also mentions her beings sexually molested by her mother's brother and by her father's brother. She even saw the physical relationship between her uncle and mother. Her mother is a vehicle through which she has expressed the position of women in Bangla society. Women have no security even in the boundaries of the houses. She shows women resisting their marginalization and victimization in all the ways possible. Nasrin herself pilfered money, met young men secretly in restaurant. She even discussed the heterosexual premarital relationship in her society. She has more memories of the arrogance and brutality of her father, less of paternal wraith.

It is only that herself a doctor, her father opposed her getting into medical college. He even stopped talking to her. Taslima does not feel shy to mention her sextual relationships and experiences, which were thought by Bangla society as pornography. Her marriage to Rudra is couple in lure. Through her autobiography Taslima has given voice to Bangali women who has protested enough but are unheard under the blanket of the male canon. She sings out the silenced voice of her society since ancient times.

Taslima expressed pungently scorn for male's attitude towards women in society. her early days were spent in a society where women and religion were realistic and critical. Woman is never safe either at home or outside. Her autobiography 'My Girlhood' makes her views about patriarchal orthodox Muslim family which values Males and Babas more than educated people. The society provides low states to women with no access to justice. Taslima's views about men are that they are oppressor, chauvinistic and self-oppressed. She thinks then men are responsible for victim condition of women.

Taslima Nasrin presents in her autobiography the crisis of women identity in Bangladesh. Identity is a defining character or personality of an individual as recognized by the society. Thus, it rises the sense of self with which other groups are excluded. The autobiography of Taslima brings to surface the position of women in Bangla society which is even made worse at the hands of religious fanatics. The identity of women in this society is questioned their sense of oneness with half the population of the society is cut off. In this way, there is a huge sense of laws with a burden of identity crises. Identities are important, because they shape human behaviors. In Taslima's society woman is neglected and denied individual group identities. Identities need freedom which is at a bay for the women. Narrowed and Broaden identities in a single hierarchy of the family brings conflict between male and female only Nasrin beautifully portraits the disability imposed on women of minority communities.

Subordination of women is a visible feature of most stages of recorded history and is prevelar in large parts of the world. She has sharply exposed the differential impact of social exigencies on men and women. In Bangladesh, Islam forces have emphasized on the importance of women adopting traditional practices such as wearing the veil, as a cultural symbol and as a weapon in the movement of Islamization against western modernization. Nasrin uses the techniques of naturalization in her work. She adopts the direct way of writing her language centers on the shackles and restrictions that blind mankind in a conservation in a religion based society.

The ultimate message spread by her is that love and harmony. Nasrin intends to erase the element of fundamentalism, communalism from the society and restore the respect to women which they deserve. She has expressed her experience, regarding violence, exploitation, oppression, subjugation and discrimination of women in the patriarchal society. She delineates the traumatic impact of violence on the women as a child as a young person or as an elder woman by the agencies inner or outer. Her autobiography tried to make the people aware of the importance of giving due respect to the women as a human being.

Nasrin protests against the exploitation of women in contemporary patriarchal society. She has strongly expressed views on unequal gender relationships in society because of the she faced exile from her homeland. Her autobiography Amar Meyebela the I volume and II volume having banned in some countries because of her critical comments unreason thought as blasphemy and pornography.

Nasrin’s autobiography is thought an attack upon Islam because of that she has caused discomfort and fear in the minds of fanatic Mulas because of her refusal to accept the authority of males and her unwillingness to face exploitation and oppression in her own life. She is even called unwomanly because of her their failed marriages and her bold writings. In her autobiography, she has crossed the way of expression and representation of Bengali middle class and presents every day social relationship and family values. She narrates herself not simple as a daughter, sister or wife but as a person and women. She resembles Kamla Das and Tehmina Durrani both of them are very bold and aggressive towards male society. women's condition always remains the same. She can be classed together with other women as a group with similar desires and interest. Race, class, geographical conditions, culture do not matter.

Taslima has written the life story from a child's point of view. The II volume is the accent of youth. It ends with her rejection of Nesha, addiction, her relationship with her husband Rudra and her final decision that she must not ruin her own life and selfhood for anyone else.

Nasrin memories of her father are full of callousness, brutality and arrogance rather than wraith. Though she recognizes time and again that her awareness of self-worth is because of her father was also a harbinger of freedom and personal growth for his daughter. Though he was not in favor of her getting admission in medical college. Her resistance and insolence got her the place she stands today. Her revolting nature continued after her marriage also she very

easily got rid of Rudra when found him unfaithful to her. Utol Hawa is an expression of the realization of duty of women to self.

Taslima Nasreen faces the discrimination and male female distinction at every step in Muslim community. Her mother was great influential agent in her life, who provoked her to think of her early age for justice, equality and rights of women. Her father's treatment to his children and wife was very rude. The memories her being raped by her uncle shared at a very early age settles deep into her mind. The sears of being abused lie so deep into her mind that she is afraid of the company of males. She is afraid to left alone. Her mother scolds her to remain home whenever she is living for the market. When her mother asks her to go to grandmother's house she replies in negative because she is in mental trauma to be left alone with male elders of the house. She as a child for was forbidden to draw human figures because it was restricted in Islam. Whenever she inquires she is scolded by her mother. According to her Ma herself moved away from me. At once she began to feel scared and insecure, afraid that someone might pull down my shorts again.

So, she describes the position of girls in her community she also describes some conspiracy going inside combine family which leave the girls growth stinted. Once she is threatened by Aunt Jhunu to give her back gold, ear rings stolen by Taslima. She also describes the position of maid Phulbhari. Taslima presents a sterically description of the maids in the society. They are forced to do more labor with less payment are hurled out of the house when not required.

They are even exploited by the master of the house. Taslima also describes herself being raped by her uncle. Was it because my uncle was older than me and for that reason alone, worthy of her respect? Or was it because she had believed them to be good people and did not want that belief shattered. As if what had happened was just not true, was a lie from start to finish, no more than a nightmare? Or maybe those men only looked like my uncle, but were really different men, enemies from some distant past!

Malala Yousafzai came to limelight with the reception of Noble prize for peace in the year 2014. She was shot on her way home from school by a gun man, who was against the strategy of getting education and inspiring other girls for the same. Malala is a symbol of courage, determination and fighter of the rights of the women. In her autobiography 'I am Malala' she mentions in detail the cause for which she was devoted. She is a spokesman of girl's education. The story begins with Malala's father, Ziauddin, the son of an Imam who has a love for learning sense of justice and education for women.

He found a school of his own but radical Talibs had made their way to valley and were threatening against the education to women. Amid the school bombing and killing of human beings Malala and her father did not submit or stoop and in spite of attack on her Malala is resolute and emerged from her battle braver and more confident. Her story is a lesson to the radials not to interfere with the rights of women and inspiration for the young girls to continue their journey for advancement.

I Am Malala is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.

“I am Malala” is the true story of a fourteen-year old girl’s campaign for women’s right to education. In 2011 Malala was shot by the Taliban in a bus on her way home from school. Two men boarded the school bus— “Who is Malala” they asked and fired gun shots; two lodged in Malala’s head. The series of events that followed, described in Malala’s voice, are remarkable—the politics, the media frenzy and her recovery. The shooting triggered a complex series of negotiations involving prominent political figures from Pakistan and England. It’s a powerful book. Malala’s story is remarkable in light of women’s role in her culture and the groups fighting to oppress women—in this case the Taliban. It was the Taliban that claimed responsibility for shooting Malala calling her crusade for education rights an “obscenity.” (Walsh, 2012).

The first half of the book Malala describes Pakistan’s history including the history of her ancestors and the northern region of Pakistan, Swat where she lives. Malala also shares stories of her family, giving the reader a glimpse into the culture of Pakistan from a young woman’s perspective. Many of the stories involve Malala’s father Ziauddin Yousafzai. She describes his involvement in local politics, in the community and his vocal support of education for boys and girls. There’s no doubt Malala’s passion and courage to stand-up for women’s rights stems from her father’s actions and character. Ziauddin Yousafzai defied Taliban orders by running a private school that encouraged girls to attend. Malala describes the challenges and frustrations her father faced when starting the school. The motto over the school’s door read “We are committed to build for the call of the new era”. Her father believed the school’s students could fight the enemy with pens, not swords.

Some reviewers claimed the book was poorly written and disjointed. It’s a valid point. The first half of the book does jump around, sometimes repeating facts. But I see this as a sign of authenticity; it’s written in a 14-year old’s voice, from her perspective. The first half of the book provides context for the second half. I could appreciate more about what happened to Malala after her shooting because of the background she included.

In Western culture it’s unthinkable that women be excluded from education. Malala and her story are symbolic of education freedom and the book delivers a message to the world. Education, considered a right for many is used as a mechanism for oppression in some countries, she asserts;

“Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow. Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human.”

Malala’s story emphasizes education’s value. Looking deeper it challenges readers to examine the role of education, its purpose and function within a society. Withholding

education from certain groups within a society hinders progress, threatens peace and perpetuates poverty. These principles also apply to Western cultures where education is the starting point for eliminating poverty, reducing crime and violence in impoverished neighborhoods. There are parallels; it's thought-provoking.

A name that her grandfather used to say, means grief-stricken. Today, millions classify it as a name that deserves respect; a name that demands respect. It is from her story as told in her book, I am Malala, titled so aptly, that we realize the depths to which this girl has gone to fight for the rights of millions of education-deprived girls out there, out in this world, of which we all are a part, though we so often fail to understand and accept it. And, all this beginning at the age of eleven? After reading her story, we realize that Malala is so much more than the fourteen-year-old Girl Who Was Shot by the Taliban. She was the girl who was shot, yet stood up re-energized and continued her fight for education and peace.

"I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban" written by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb is not just any other non-fiction book. At first glance, it may appear to recount Malala's story - where she grew up, how she grew up, how her parents' lives played a big role in affecting hers, and so on and so forth.

But what we fail to realize is that it's not just a 320-page autobiography of one person. In these pages, lies the biography of million of girls out there who are deprived of education. Quoting Malala from her Nobel Peace Prize Speech, "I tell my story, not because it is unique but because it is not. It is the story of many girls. Though I appear as one girl, one person... I am not a lone voice. I am not a lone voice. I am many. I am those sixty-six million girls who are deprived of education and today, I am not raising my voice. It is the voice of those sixty-six million girls."

Set in Swat Valley, Pakistan in the year 2012, the story of this young girl leaves one spellbound. It begins with the prolog which recounts the events that unfolded on that fateful day leading up to the time Malala was shot. Divided into five parts, the book then leads the readers into the first part which describes how Malala's father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, struggled to fulfill his dream of setting up a school in Swat, how Malala's parents met and the struggles of their early married life, Malala's birth and her early childhood as a student in her father's school in the pre-Taliban days, while also incorporating certain aspects of the Pakistani and Pashtun culture.

A certain characteristic of this part of the book and the next, which talks of the advent of the Taliban and how the lives of the people changed drastically, is that it tends to dwell a lot more on Pakistani history and politics than what the average reader might be able to take in at one go. For a history fanatic, it would be quite interesting, but for others, it might turn out to be quite a bore. On the other hand, some people argue that it all acts to build a foundation to help the reader understand where Malala came from, who she was, and what shaped her beliefs and views. Others say that here, we find Christina Lamb's voice speaking rather than Malala's. And it's all about the reader's perception and expectations from the book.

While readers might be picking up this book to learn more about Malala, herself, they should also remember that the book was published with the intent to campaign for girls' rights to education in patriarchal societies and for the cause to find a place in a reader's heart, the writers were bound to paint a picture of the culture embedded in such societies, which they could do only by recounting the events which led to such a belief. The book wants to tell Malala's story while at the same time, wanting its readers to understand who Malala was and what the millions of Malalas out there have to go through. In the version published by Phoenix in 2014, an interview of Malala by her US editor, Judy Clain has also been included. The photos of Malala's childhood and her life after the attack also lend a more personal touch to the book. Some readers might find those two things more interesting than the book itself.

But, as mentioned before, we need to remember that the book has been written with a different goal in mind. The book has been written with a view to stirring something in the readers' hearts, and that something is not sympathy for Malala, but the desire to share Malala's passion for education and peace.

To be able to speak up and not be afraid, to just be able to set foot in school every day - it is not something that should be taken for granted. This book has taught all this and so much more. And what's inspiring is that it's not just the book; not just the words that are doing the magic. It's the story itself.

As the story progresses to the day that Malala was shot, having been targeted by the Taliban for "spreading secularism," to her recovery in Birmingham and her new life there, we suddenly realize that all this happened in the past five years or so. One thing that seemed lacking here is that the writer failed to mention years while quoting dates. Take for example when Malala writes, "On 12 July, I turned fifteen..." There's so much going on in the story that one loses track of time and although the book provides a timeline of important events in Pakistan and Swat at the back, it would have helped to connect the events together and relate them to what was going on in our own lives at that time, had the author mentioned the year in the course of writing the story itself.

Moving on, some argue that the facts have been tainted by the beliefs of the writers. Some say that Pakistan and America have been unnecessarily portrayed in a bad light, as you can tell when during one instance in the book, Malala refers to her country's politicians as "useless." And well, one can never be sure how objective the authors have been. The page of acknowledgments at the end of the book reveals how Christina Lamb took the help of various people while recounting Pakistan's story, but eventually, it is up to us to exercise caution when deciding what we want to believe.

The world needs peace and the world needs love, and if there is one thing that can bring forth love and peace, it is education. As the millions of girls out there say, I am Malala, not because I am her, which I am not, but because I choose to speak up. I am Malala and so are you. All you have to do is find your voice and let it out.

These writers are the same, as Elaine Showalter delineates, woman as a writer – producer of her own text, in her own language, by her own thoughts which are combined by her own feelings and reactions. She uses for them the term 'gynocritics' which is derived from the French word 'la gynocritique'. She applies it to mean woman as a writer and critic,

"…woman as a writer – with woman as the producer of textual meaning, history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women. Its subjects include the psychodynamics of female creativity, linguistics and the problem of a female language…"

These autobiographies reveal the social stigma attached with the birth of a girl child. Kamala Das, Amrita Pritam, Taslima Nasreen and Shoba De, excepting Gaytri Devi and Nayantara Sahgal in the present project, are some of the women autobiographers who have faced dilemma at their birth and often found themselves in a pathetic condition. The birth of Nayantara Sehgal was also regretted by visitors to her house, as she was one of the three daughters of Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Pandit without bearing a son.

Amrita Pritam and Kamala Das have been very sensitive to adverse and scandalous criticism. About critic Kamala has said with contempt,

"They help to sell books they attack. Overall critics are ugly lot, full of venom and frustration, Poor things. They must use their fangs. For their own comfort, like cobras or Russell's vipers."

Similarly, Amrita, fed up with her critics, writers in her autobiography,

"I have had to fight a lifelong battle with my contemporaries. Only now that I am constrained to write about i.e. appeal to them in the name of truth not to subtract anything or make excuse. My only wish is that those who have had nothing to do with me in life should have nothing to do with me after my death."

Shobhaa narrates an incident where her father has scolded her. When Kunda got gold medal, he told her,

"It is your attitude, you have the aptitude and grasp. But no application, and how can you excel such a lackluster approach?"

Her poetry is a serious break from the erstwhile female Indian poets like that of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu, but a celebration of the universal experience of self, love-despair, anguish, failure and disgust against the traditional mode of gender manifestation apprehended through a feminine Indian awareness. Being a poet; she maintains the grace of her creativity while narrating the story of her life. She now here tries to control even those facts of life, which give birth to hypocrisy in society. Her vision of life is broad enough to make her story the 'stamp of truth'.

Dalip Kaur Tiwana is a sensitive and prolific Punjabi writer who has given a new approach and perspective for the study of social reality of crucial issues concerning women. The translation of her works into English, besides rendering much larger readership, gives an insight into the deeper psychological understandings of the peripheral existence of women in Punjab. Tiwana's purpose is to explore and set out the extent to which a society has established the discriminative order of caste, class and gender. She analyzes these issues of class, caste and gender which, when viewed together, offer a comprehensive précis of the feminist work undertaken to date to explain men's violence against women in a society. Tiwana posits that women who are toiling masses are leading their life as beasts of burden and as victims of dominant caste onslaught. It is but natural that they are mute.

She wrote her first novel, Agni Prikhya (The Ordeal of Fire), followed by – Vãt Hamãri (Our Journey, 1970), Teeli Da Nishan (Mark of Nose-pin, 1971), Suraj Te Samundar (Sun and Ocean, 1972), Doosri Sita (Second Sita, 1975), Sarkandeya De Desh (The Land of Reeds), Dhup, Chhãn Te Rukh (The Sunlight Trees and Shadows, 1976), Lammi Udãri (A Long Flight), and her latest novel Peele Patian Di ãstãn (The Tale of Yellow Leaves). Apart from these novels, Tiwana wrote an autobiography entitled Nange Pairan Da Safar (Travelling on Bare Feet).

Tiwana also published six collections of short fiction: Sadhana (Endeavour), Yatra (Pilgrimage), Kise Di Dhee (Someone's Daughter), Ik Kuri (A Girl), Tera Kamra Mera Kamra (Your Room My Room) and Malan (Gardener's Wife). Many of Tiwana's short stories and novels have been translated into Hindi and other Indian languages, and English. Such is Her Fate (Punjabi University), Journey on Bare Feet (Orient Longman), Gone are the Rivers (Macmillan) are some of the English translations. The Tale of the Phoenix (Ajanta) translated by Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh. Khushwant Singh, Jai Rattan, Danielle Gill from Paris and Parvesh Sharma are some the other translators of Tiwana's works. Doordarshan also telecasts a few serials based on her writings. A few of her books are also published in the Farsi script in Lahore.

The women writers undertaken in the present study and their autobiographies express glaring similarities and contrast in their not only attitude and linguistic but in portrayal of the surroundings, society and incidents witnessed by them of their era for e.g. Amrita Pritam , Kamala Das and Shobhaa De have had unconventional ways of thinking and have therefore become quite controversial. They do not conform to the established norms of the society; they defy them. They have revolted against the traditional man-woman relationship their attitude to sex is different from the puritanical attitude of their contemporaries. They challenge all the taboos. They disapprove of the conventional marriage of girls at an early age and the wide age gap between husband and wife.

Thus, all the women writers included in the research work are towering 20th century Asian women. They challenged the male dominance in society and braved the challenges put before them. They competed and defeated century old traditions and customs. Writing became a

weapon for them, in which they poured all their pain, frustration, grief and desp air. They recognized their own worth in the society.

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Chapter - III

Different Approaches, Different Solution

Leigh Gilmore rightly marks 'Every autobiography is the fragment of a theory'. In A Room Of One's Own by Virginia Wolf speaks about women being reserved the right place in society, as far as the society is made to be shared by men and women, let women be assigned a room of their own without interfering in the so-called men's worldche" of their own, thus originating feminism In the last half of the 20th century, the human rights and feminist movements influenced contemporary autobiographical practice in developing multiple strands and helplessly getting involved in the discovery of a true Self.

There is a growing body of critical material that argues that women have developed a separate tradition on the autobiographical genre, one in which selfhood comes out as a mediated entity influenced by the male discourse.

In A Poetics of Woman's Autobiography (1987), Sidonie Smith has explained "the autobiographical inscription as the result of the interaction of the women's marginality with the self-authorization that comes in writing their life stories. As a result, the genre, she argues, *"is characterized by a 'double' voice." (qtd. in Culley, 1992:65).*

Women's unique perspective is a consciousness of alterity that enables them to recognize the importance of the Other in the creation of selfhood.

Elaine Showalter delineates woman as a writer – producer of her own text, in her own language, by her own thoughts which are combined by her own feelings and reactions. She uses the term 'gynocritics' which is derived from the French word 'la gynocritique'. She applies it to mean woman as a writer and critic,

"…woman as a writer – with woman as the producer of textual meaning, history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women. Its subjects include the psychodynamics of female creativity, linguistics and the problem of a female language..."

The autobiographies selected for the present research contain in them seeds of various modern theories like postmodernism, post colonialism, feminism, post structuralism, depiction of self, quest of identity, woman as an agency to bring change in society and Lacanian psychoanalysis in terms of mirror stage.

Feminist and postcolonial discourses succeed ideas of universal subjectivity. Marcus implies that modernity's critique of the universal subject wanted to dispense with subjectivity altogether. Burke, however, further argues that postcolonial and feminist approaches, with their investment in post structuralism, continue to neglect important resources that can be found in past notions of authorship. Such a criticism could only be leveled at some theorists

associated with post-structuralism and post colonialism. As we will see, time and again postcolonial theory not only questions but also performs the tasks Burke demands. Indian female autobiography mirrors pretentions much more challenging than that.

Women's unique perspective is a consciousness of alterity that enables them to recognize the importance of the Other in the creation of selfhood.

As Shari Benstock emphasizes in The Private Self (1988), "for white American women, the Self comes wrapped in gender, or rather gender constitutes the invisible, seamless wrapping of authorship, because of a rather simplistic and one-dimensional understanding of how it has been imagined." David Parker has recently argued the related point that,

'the thin third-person languages of post-Saussurean theory are inadequate for many first person life purposes'.

Laura Marcus observes the polarization in critical approaches towards universal subjectivity in a similar way:

Although autobiography – as concept or as a body of texts – is undoubtedly a crucial site for explorations or constructions of selfhood and identity, the focus on universal subjectivity, or the denial, resulted in a neglect of ethnic and gender diversity and differential subjectivities, and a highly abstract concept of identity.

Women, especially in Asia, are burdened with the responsibility of upholding the ethics of morality, culture and chastity; whereas, men are often relieved from this binding, and any breach of conduct from their side, on similar issues is considered normal by the society and is, often, ignored. A woman's point of view would open for retrospection too many sacrosanct notions. For Helene Cixous, a woman's practice of writing has to be based on a very different order of meaning to that of phallocentric symbolic order. Cixous, through her critique, sets up a mode of "ecriture feminine" or writing the body. Contrary to the feminine as "lack" and absence, Cixous's writing practice epitomizes it as myriad, immeasurable creative pageant, with its display of the tableau of the female body under whose effect the felicity of the text will annihilate all coercions and repressions.

Amrita Pritam, Gayatri Devi, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sahgal and Shobhaa De, the women autobiographers the present project deals with, belonged to the times, when women had no option but to live up to the ideals of chastity and sexual passivity, endorsing in an undeterred manner the blueprint of an 'ideal wife' laid down by patriarchy. Their autobiographies present the theme of marital dissatisfaction and freedom of sexual code. Discontentment with all that marriage signifies becomes blasphemous, and writers, generally, lack the grit and persuasion to question and invert marital bonds. They expose the claustrophobia, dreariness and entrapment of matrimony and resent its hollow morality. *They* reflect the progression of feminine sexuality outside the purview of marriage. Female sexuality as a new discourse

serves as a springboard for bringing to the surface the hitherto repressed thoughts, transmuting the conventional heroine into a sexually liberated woman.

All the female autobiographers of the chosen texts travel from ignorance to purpose, and the feminist yearning for equality manages to acquire a suitable literary expression by remodeling the traditional myths. Nurturing her protagonist's development from unhappy conformity to gradual assertion, the writer successfully manages to overcome the traditional plot in her desire for changes.

All these life stories reflect Lacanian "mirror stage". Their stories are the mirrors which reflect their images vastly. When a daughter looks into the mirror the image she sees is inseparably linked with the image she has in her mind of her mother. Psychology tells us that mirrors are not mere curiosities for humans but a necessity. They give us an image of ourselves and it is upon the nature of this image that all our actions and reactions rest. Many theoreticians have made a mark by discussing the effect of self-images, the most famous being Lacan’s mirror stage.

The mirror stage was the subject of Jacques Lacan's first official contribution to psychoanalytic theory. He described it in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," the first of his Écrits. As can be understood from the very title, the mirror stage describes the formation of the Ego via the process of identification, the Ego being the result of identifying with one's own secular image (Bristow 84). By the early 1950s, he no longer considered it as a moment in the life of the infant, but as representing a permanent structure of subjectivity, a phase in which the subject is permanently caught and captivated by his own image. Lacan writes,

“The mirror stage marks a decisive turning-point in the mental development of the child”

The dual relationship (relation duelle) refers not only to the relation between the Ego and the body, which is always characterized by illusions of similarity and reciprocity, but also to the relation between the Imaginary and the Real. The visual identity given by the mirror supplies imaginary “wholeness” to the experience of a fragmentary real. In more illustrative terms:

At six months the baby still lacks coordination, however, it can recognize itself in the mirror before attaining control over its bodily movements. The child sees its image as a whole, and the synthesis of this image produces a sense of contrast with the incoordination of the body, which is perceived as a fragmented body. This contrast is first felt by the infant as a rivalry with its own image, because the wholeness of the image threatens it with fragmentation, and thus the mirror stage gives rise to an aggressive tension between the subject and the image. To resolve this aggressive tension, the subject identifies with the image: this primary identification with the counterpart is what forms the Ego. (Evans, D. 128)

The moment of identification is to Lacan a moment of jubilation since it leads to an imaginary sense of mastery. Yet, the jubilation may also be accompanied by a depressive

reaction, when the infant compares his own precarious sense of mastery with the omnipotence of the mother.

The Mirror Stage has also a significant symbolic dimension. The Symbolic order is present in the figure of the adult who is carrying the infant: the moment after the subject has jubilantly assumed his image as his own, he turns his head toward this adult who represents the big 'Other' as if to call on him to ratify this image. The child forms the image of the self by comparing its image to that of the mother. Though according to Lacan, the child is struck by the omnipotence of the mother, it is this other figure in the mirror which gives the child an individual identity. So to begin with, the first individual id entity that a child forms of himself is that he is "not the mother" in the mirror. Yet as Freud has said there is a period which comes prior to this, when the human infant identifies itself with its mother and sees the rest of the world as the other. This is referred to as the "pre-Oedipal" stage where the child has no sense of corporate or psychic identity. The maternal body is experienced as a continuum of "auto-erotic" pleasure and plenitude. Jayita Sengupta in her *Refractions of Desire* (2006) describes the transition stage thus,

"As subjectivity is to be constructed in relation to objectivity, for a sense of "me" to be conceived there has to be a sense of a separate 'other'."

"Stabat Mater," Julia Kristeva's prose poetic meditation on her own experience with maternity accompanied by a hypertext essay on the veneration of the Virgin Mary, understands motherhood as, like language.

To understand these women we need to begin with the bond that they shared with their mothers definitely carries a lot of weight. A halo of the personality of mothers of the concerned writers influenced their childhood as well as the grown up life. Nayantara Sahgal's mother Mrs. Vijayluxmi Pandit influenced her daughter's personality a lot. She cooked miraculous meals, was an expert interior decorator, With a great zeal she stored away her expensive sarees and jewelry and accepted everything swadeshi.

"But never did clothes and jewellery have less to do with enhancing a woman's appearance. Austerely dressed, and without any of ornaments that tradition demands that a Hindu wife wear, she (Mrs. Pandit) emerged far more striking than before."

Amrita Preetam's mother Died when she was ten years old, and after her death Amrita renounced God. Her childhood memories are very bitter. As advised by her father she turned to poetry after mother's death. Shobhaa De's relations with her mother are cordial and she was the only child in the family whose birthdays were celebrated. Gayatri Devi was immensely influenced by her mother. Like her mother she also chose a husband of her own choice. She had inherited her sense of dressing from her mother only.

Sahgal relished the fact that the name of Vijayluxmi became a legend in the villages of U.P. She enjoyed taking her mother's lunch to the secretariat. Though her mother worked outside

home, she was quite aware about what was going on, in & around her home and allotted sufficient time to kids and home.

"Mummy was a person of beauty, warmth and understanding. Her presence was like sunlight and we blossomed in it."

The autobiographies outside India have a great influence of their mother on them. Taslima Nasreen, since her childhood was developing a feeling rebellion inside herself as she saw her father deceiving her mother. The dominance of her father had preserved all her childhood and she developed apathy as well as hatred and revenge against male community. She saw her mother finding refuge in religion as started going to Pir Amirulla's house. Though she didn't approve her mother's blind devotion and exploitation through Pir but the imprison of that time lasted an imprint upon her heart & mind which taught her to find a way through rebellion only. Later on she choose occupation of her own choice despite the opposition from her father.

Jhamak Ghimire also had an affinity with her mother rather than her father. Most of all her relationship with her grandmother was the most sound relationship with her which lasted all her life. Her mother could not found enough time spend with her. So either she passed her time with sisters or with grandmother. After the death of grandmother she felt loneliness and depression.

She says "They naturally imposed the culture upon their children. The colors of anger and emotion were inherited in the minds of their children in such a way that the whole life would turn into a collage, the more one drinks the intoxication, the more one want to drink. I also felt excessive anger and emotion in my childhood, as a result its impact could be felt subsequently in one's thought, behavior, and activities."

Ghimire’s narrative is a real story she lived. It’s not only the story of a disabled woman but the book also portrays a very cruel facet of our society where a female disabled person is attacked continuously by the missiles of discrimination on the basis of religion, culture, gender, patriarchy and the concept of karma. Nepalese society has a specified roles for a female. Marriages are arranged by their parents on the basis of their bodily beauty and sexually healthy or ability of giving birth. Ghimire do not meet all these roles of a female to be selected as a bride and that’s why she was neglected. Even her parents and neighbors would pray for her early death so that she would not have to live a cursed life (disabled life). Her life seems like a punishment. In Nepalese culture, it is believed if a person’s deeds are bad or evil in their past life, they are born disabled in present life. It is believed that all the sufferings is the fruit of karma what he/she did in the past life.

The book also depicts about the superstitious beliefs of Nepalese Society on Shamans. Shamans chant the mantras loudly and tries to cure her disability which was incurable. On the other side, a daughter’s birth is a matter of sadness because she is not supposed to continue her father’s hierarchy. And when a child is born disabled, female, poor, lower caste, her life

is already compounded with grief, she grows up to live a life of hatred, tease and pain bestowed by the society. Ghimire is also one of the victim. The social cultural condition of the global south is full of illiteracy, superstition, poverty and it is deeply rooted on the name of rituals, traditions and values. It is more than a curse to be born as a female disabled child in such place of the globe. Comparatively disabled male has more opportunities in the society than disabled female. For example, a disabled man can marry a able woman but disabled woman are forced to remain unmarried throughout their lives. The discrimination is doubled by their disability and being female.

However, Ghimire surpassed her bodily pain by expressing herself through her writings. Despite the patriarchal barriers and prejudice, this phenomenal woman very genuinely uses her powerful weapon of expressive writing to blow away the hypocrite virtues, religious beliefs, morals and principles.

To sum up, Ghimire's "Jeevan kada ki phool" is an absolute slap to the so called 'abled society' who preaches the glory of goddesses (says one thing) but in reality subordinate women (does another thing). Thus, the book is an eye opener and a must read for all women and humankind.

Malala by going through her autobiography seems to be totally under the influence of her father. She got ethics, integrity, perseverance, resolution from her father. Only like her father she is advent to brave bullet in her head rather than abandoning the agenda of girl education. She forbears Oedipus complex inside her.

"I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday".

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.

When she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive.

Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Malala who decided to fight for women's right to education when this fundamental right was taken away by the Taliban. Malala was born in 1997. Both her mother and father came from a very remote part of Pakistan called Shangla. They moved to a small town called Mingora in a district called Swat Valley just a hundred miles from Afghanistan. Malala's birth was not a cause for celebration mostly because she was not a boy and also because the family was extremely poor and had no money for a big feast. Her father named her Malala after a

courageous woman who lead the troops in a battle against the British in 1880. In fact the name means grief-stricken.

Her mother was illiterate but the father was a great speaker and he was very involved in many environmental, social and political causes around the region. He was a teacher and he decided to open schools along with his friends and business partners. He opened up schools for both boys and girls in a time when most of the women were illiterate and had no inclination to pursue an education. He encouraged his daughter to learn and be an independent woman rather than a humble wife who cooks, cleans, has children and never leaves the house.

The arrival of the Taliban brought a dramatic change to the region. They set up a radio broadcast and started telling people to burn their books, their CD's and DVD's, to keep the girls away from schools and to return to the old ways of Islam. Pakistan was very affected by a big earthquake, by huge floods and other natural disasters so people thought that they were punished by God and listened to the Taliban.

Malala kept going to school and she started giving interviews in order to promote education and women's rights. She was just a child but she spoke from the heart and people listened to her speeches and she received many awards. She wrote a blog for the BBC website in which she described life under the Taliban rule. Her father encouraged her and they kept their spirits up in spite of the numerous threats they received and the people that were killed every day by the Taliban. The reign of terror lasted many years and people did nothing to defend themselves and to get rid of the Taliban until the government started up a war and drove them from the region.

In 2012 Malala was coming home from school when their school bus was stopped and a young man started shooting the girls. He shot Malala in the head and he injured other two girls who happened to be in his way. Malala was taken to the local hospital but she was getting worse and worse so she was taken to a military hospital and than out of the country. She was transported to a hospital in England where she spent many months having surgery and recovering from her wounds. She received international support and she was visited by many important people even if she was only fifteen years old. Her dedication attracted attention all over the world and thousands of people wrote her letters and sent her gifts.

The family remained in England even if they wanted nothing more than to return home to their beautiful Swat Valley. Malala gave many speeches to the UN and other international organizations promoting women's right to education. She is an internationally acclaimed young woman and she is still very involved in women's cause for freedom of speech and education.

All these autobiographies contain the seeds of past modernism in them. They have offered new patterns of meaning which reject completeness and order. They contain randomness and challenge the traditional concepts of completeness of the self. All these autobiographies blur the boundaries of fact & fiction, history and myth. Text is developed in a new way and there

is a challenge to the old customs of race, sexuality, class and religion. Their style of understatement and fragmentation represent their life only.

All these autobiographies are research for identity either there is search for identity or an effort to rejuvenate the split self through the gaining for true love.

Kamla Das, Shoba De, Taslima Nasreen and Amrita Pritam have represented themselves as bold women and admit very frequently their sex relationship with males other than their husbands. Despite the uproar of the relatives and friends they are not sticking to social taboos.

They have rubbed the difference, fact and fiction, time and gender and have raised same questions to the society through their autobiographies. They all raise a very significant question of femininity or girlhood. For Taslima and Kamala Das girlhood days were full of uncertainty and obscurity. Amrita Pritam's mind is imprinted with riots of partition. Malala's childhood is fainted with threats of Muslim group who wants girls to keep away from education. Jamak has to fight with her own disability and somehow controls her complex and sense of shame.

In Nepal many cultural factors play critical role in forming an ideology of ability such as patriarchy, caste, color, sex and gender discrimination. Each of these social and cultural factors are woven in irreligious discourse and further ideologically strengthen.

Cultural construction and different ideological perception serve to hide the identity of women and present them between patriarchy and imperialism, subject, constitution and object formation, the figure of the women disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violet shutting which is the displaced figuration of the third world women, caught between tradition and modernization.

Ghimire's writing creates discourses by resisting the normative standards of beauty, femininity and motherhood.

Feminist theories highlight the importance of questioning the cultural construct of body, identity and subjectivity. Jhamak Kumari Ghimire born was born with severe disability that has prevented her from using her arms and suffers from limited movement of her body and slurred speech called cerebral palsy and writes with her left foot, can hear but not speak and has limited eye sight. Being deprived of an education didn't stop her from learning how to read and write all by herself and she has progressed so far along this path that she is today and award-winning author of 10 published books comprising both prose and poetry.

"I remember now that at the time I first learnt to write the letters of the alphabet, I could not share the joy with anyone. I had, nevertheless, mastered the art of scrawling letters even if it was on the bare earth and had learnt to pronounce them although only within my mind. The first day I had been able to scribble the first letter of the consonant (*Ka), I had sprayed a*

cloud of dust in the air out of sheer happiness because I had broken innumerable twigs time and again in order to learn writing this letter and I bruised the tender skin rubbing against the soil. Moreover, my toes bled when I practiced writing by dipping them on the dew drops collected on the bowl."

Ghimire's autobiography 'Jiwan Kada ki Phool' is an autobiography where she has expressed the struggle and hardship she suffered to fulfill her desire to learn to read and write.

Being born with disability did not stop her from learning to read and write. She used to listen to her sister pronounce the letters and do the same silently. She used to observe how her father caught her sister's hand and taught her to write the letters in paper. She did it herself but her pencil would either be the dew drops she collected in her feet, bamboo stems or the rocks and her paper would always be the wide and welcoming earth.

Jiwan Kada ki Phool describes her life and her struggle since her childhood. It starts with her early memories of childhood. The care and support she received from her grandmother contrary to the bitter way the society treated her. The feelings of an innocent child growing up amidst the hatred of the society, her feelings and emotions she could never utter a word of, her anger towards the discrimination she faced from the society for being born physically disabled, her silent reactions to all those bitter things the society said to her and her struggle for existence and acknowledgement after the death of her grandmother is expressed beautifully in the book. The words and sentences used are quite similar to the day-to-day language used in the villages of Nepal.

Jhamak Ghimire is considered Nepali equivalent of Hellen Keller as both of them suffered from the same disease cerebral palsy. But Ghimire, unlike Keller, belonged to a poor family in a poor country where the parents wished their physically disabled children were rather dead than suffering. She did not receive encouragement or support from her family for learning to read and write. However, she proved herself as one of the most aspiring and promising Nepali authors. Although her life had always been full of struggle and hardship, it never deterred her from her desire to learn. Her determination and strong will-power resulted in giving birth to an aspiring author and one of the most inspirational books of all times.

The story of Jhamak Ghimire, a girl who was born disabled three decades ago. She could not move her limbs, both hands and feet, she could not speak either. It was in a poor family of eastern Nepal that lived in a village full of superstition, that did not consider girl child and women as human beings. Jhamak's story of suffering and struggle for freeing herself from the status of an animal is very vividly recorded in her autobiography 'A Flower in the Midst of Thorns'. This presentation is a brief account of how a child suffering from cerebral palsy by birth managed to fight to free herself from a state of sheer ignorance and hatred and could attract the attention of the world through literature, how she learned to read and write and what message she has given to parents, educators, society, medical practitioners of world. Jhamak's autobiography reveals the story of her struggle so poignantly and so boldly that one is shocked to read. She has become a synonym to self-confidence.

Jhamak had cerebral palsy at birth, yet it was not diagnosed until a few years ago. This handicapped her severely, and she underwent untold suffering in her childhood, though the ignorant parents tried to cure her with the help of witch doctors and shamans and palmists or astrologers. Failing to cure her, they abandoned hopes and some even wished her death. They believed that as she had sinned in her previous life, she is being punished by fate. This is her Karma or destiny that she should undergo.

Jhamak Ghimire is the only creative person from Asia to have been suffered from cerebral palsy, to have attracted the attention of the world, who showed indomitable courage to prove that disability is merely a superstition. Despite all odds, she gave a perennial message that life is a Flower, though amidst thorns. Evaluating her contribution, people have compared her fruitful life with that of Helen Keller or Stephen Hawking.

But Jhamak had to learn reading and writing entirely on her own, and words fail to describe the story of the ordeal and suffering she underwent while learning them. From her childhood, she was treated as a non-entity. Her family and other people called her "serpent" because she crawled on the ground. Everyone who saw her pitied her, because she was no more than a vegetable that ate what was provided to her by her family, and did nothing else. People just wished for her death, because that might be easier for her than to live. But all the time, Jhamak hated these outpourings of pity, and longed to reach out to the world. The determination to make her way out of her shell of silence grew every day. Life was a curse in hell.

The most important event in her life is her incessant love for words and her struggle to learn them. She learnt words simply by hearing other people speak, and only after reading her accounts do we realize that it is so hard to learn when you are just listening and not speaking:

"My younger sister used to pronounce vowel sounds with father, but I had no voice to utter those letters, although I had powers of hearing. As a result, I would silently and inwardly try to pronounce what I had heard and repeat them twice, thrice or more. He used to hold my younger sister's hand and teach her how to write those letters, that is s (ka), v (kha), u (ga), etc. On my part, I would collect the dew drops falling from the eaves of the roof in a crucible, crawl up to a little distance, dip my toes in that crucible and, with the dew, attempt to scribble some letters at random on a nearby rock stone. When there was no dew collected, I used to break little bamboo twig, make a 'pencil' out of that and try to scrawl letters, using the flat earth as my 'exercise book'. As I would scrawl with dew-dipped foot-finger (toe) on a rock, the force of scrubbing would peel off my soft skin many times without number. But, nothing ever deterred me from learning. Whether my toes be bleeding or I mastered writing or not was immaterial to me."

These are tremendously powerful lines, because they shed light on the plight of Jhamak, and all other people in her situation. It is the only way that we can hear her viewpoints, and feel her struggle. That is the only way that we realize there is a problem in how we treat disabled

people in our family first then in community, and that is the only way that we can start solving it.

Jhamak saw her siblings going to school, but no one gave a single thought to her education. She was desperate to communicate with the world, but had neither speech, nor gestures, nor words, to do so. She realized that her sister's schoolbooks could be the key to her escape from her lonely world. Through her own effort and determination, she sneaked looks into her sister's books, and the way her father taught her sister Mina, she learnt to write the first letter secretly, on her own without being noticed by others, writing them on the ground or dusty floor, sometimes with the help of charcoal when they were away. Thrilled with achievement, she wrote the first letter down on the mud, and waited for her family to recognize her achievement. Instead, no one even realized that she had written a letter on the ground, and life went on as usual for them. Her triumph was in vain, known only to her.

"I remember now that at the time I first learnt to write the letters of the alphabet, I could not share the joy with anyone. I had, nevertheless, mastered the art of scrawling letters even if it was on the bare earth and had learnt to pronounce them although only within my mind. The first day I had been able to scribble the first letter of the consonant s (Ka), I had sprayed a cloud of dust in the air out of sheer happiness because I had broken innumerable twigs time and again in order to learn writing this letter and I bruised the tender skin rubbing against the soil. Moreover, my toes bled when I practiced writing by dipping them on the dew drops collected on the bowl."

After much struggle, Jhamak was finally able to convince her family that she had started writing. Even then, nobody saw any point in her education, and she had to beg and plead to get a single notebook to write on. Inspired only by her strong determination, Jhamak continued to struggle until she began writing coherently with the help of the toes of left foot, and started sending out her creations to local newspapers. She thus explored the power of words and connected herself with a world of power made up of knowledge and information. Now she could communicate with the world. This lit a lamp and began to illuminate her rebellious heart.

In a matter of some 15 years of wiring and reading and self practice all alone she produced 11 books namely,

- Sankalpa (Resolution—An anthology of poems) 1998

- Aaphnai Chita Agnishikhatira (My Burning Pyre—An anthology of poems) 2000

- Manchhebhitraka Yoddhaharu (Hidden Fighters Within Man—An anthology of poems) 2000

- Awasaanpachhiko Aagaman (Arrival after Death—Miscellaneous collection) 2000

 Samjhanaka Bachhitaharu (Sprinklings of My Reminiscence—Collection of articles) 2000

 Naulo Pratibimba (Nobel Images—An anthology of poems)

 Parda Samaya Ra Manchheharu (Curtain, Time and Man—An anthology of short Stories) 2005

 Bemausamka Aasthaharu (Untimely Beliefs—An anthology of essays) 2007

 Jhamak Ghimireka Kavitaharu (Jhamak Ghimire's Poems—An anthology of poems)

 Jiwan Kaanda Ki Phool (A Flower in the midst of thorns—An autobiography in prose) 2010

 Raat Ra Bhootpretaharuko Santras (Ghosts and Nightly Terror—An anthology of articles) 2010

Her autobiographical work A Flower in the midst of thorns is her magnum opus. It took her 4 years to complete and the book came in 2010. She has decided to come out with the story of her life in her autobiography after a long struggle, because she had to fight the family and society and the tyrannical rulers and a most difficult time of war, conflict and insurgency in Nepali history.

Her ignored life, a state of sheer helplessness and the amount of struggle she required to uplift herself was tremendous. This made her an uncompromising rebel against the social norms and values. These experiences developed in her a different perspective on the world, she could see things from a clearer perspective because she was under no obligation to approve the status-quo like everyone else.

The area of disability and romance has not been studied very deeply in any culture, maybe because there are few disabled people who are willing to write about those aspects. We find that society does not holds disability and romance in a very positive light. Disabled people are viewed with pity and sympathy, and the idea of them having romantic lives horrifies or amuses many of us. One of the most touching scenes in the book is when Jhamak describes how her clothes would wear out soon because of her crawling, leaving her body exposed. Construction workers from neighboring house would hit her with balls of mud or stone, aiming at her exposed genitals. She recounts their talk during these moments: they comment that though she may be beautiful in her youth, no one is going to marry her, or like her, and it is sure that such a one as she can never have any romantic feelings.

Jhamak has gone ahead and spoken about her romantic feelings in her autobiography. She describes that she finds herself pretty when she looks at the mirror. She has remarked elsewhere that she would love to get married and have children, even though she acknowledges that it may not be possible. This is a very brave step, because by admitting these feelings, Jhamak has opened herself up to ridicule, derision, and more pity from the

society. But once society has had its say, Jhamak's admission has opened up far more significant avenues. Not many people know that Helen Keller, a person who was deaf and blind as well, had once been in love. She was prepared to run away with her lover, but her family was horrified at the idea of a person like her falling in love, and stopped the proceedings immediately. Today Helen Keller is renowned for her positive thoughts and inspirational personality, but after the failure of her romantic attempt, she had battled depression for a long time. Her romantic feelings are not well known, even in the most of her biographies, because society gives no place to romance of disabled people. We can only imagine the frustration that she and other disabled people have to face when they are not even allowed to express their romantic feelings and hopes, wish that they had a loving future, let alone fulfill any of these wishes. Acknowledgement of the problem is the first step towards its solution, and Jhamak, by her admission, has acknowledged that society has a problem. The problem is our view of disabled people as being asexual, and it can be addressed when more and more people open up and start looking for solutions. This calls for a change of our attitude towards the disabled people. She lays everything bare.

Jhamak has braved the ridicule and derision of society in many other ways that apply not just to disabled people but to ordinary human beings equally. She lays the most humiliating parts of her life bare for the reader to feel. She mentions how difficult it is for her to perform her bodily functions, and how she often had no option but to wear soiled clothes for days. Many of us have undergone humiliating incidents in our childhood and adulthood, and most will go through them in our old age. But most of us will never have the courage to write about such humiliating moments in our lives in public. Only by discussing our issues can we get to the solution, most of us find it hard to be as honest as Jhamak has been. Through her honesty, Jhamak has set a standard for all writers, and encouraged everyone to share their problems.

Though Jhamak claims that she does not write under any "isms", her work itself touches upon many of the current isms prevalent in society. The most prominent of them is feminism. Jhamak expresses strongly feminist viewpoints at turn, with which every woman can identify. She mentions how everyone treated her worse just because she was a woman. She mentions how terrified she was at her menstruation, and how she blanched at being confined indoors during her periods (in Nepal, it is normal to confine women in a single room during their menstruation).

The language used by these women writers is almost always poetical with abundant use of symbolism, metaphors and imagery. Landscape and nature, city and houses or rooms, are all sources of symbolic enrichment of their narrative. Travel is also a metaphor for the passage from childhood to adulthood, from life to death, and from sanity to madness. The metaphor of the journey also expresses the process of the discovery of love and sexuality, their relation to art and culture. The journey metaphor becomes an exploration of the nature of the self, emphasizing the multiple, ever-changing selves which inhabit the mind.

A woman is expected to be modest, shy, demure, passive, soft-spoken and attractive. She is not encouraged to be active, assertive, comp etitive and unattractive. *"Most women writers do not write about the condition of being born homely."*

Catherine Drinker Bowen remarks: *"Every girl who lacks beauty knows instinctively that she belongs to an unprivileged group and that to climb up and out she will have to be cleverer and stronger and more ruthless perhaps than she would choose to be."*

"Women have long been nameless. They have not been persons. Handed by a father to another man, the husband, they have been objects of circulation, exchanging one name for another."

Prof. Meena Sodhi opines that a common and absurd practice, which is highlighted in some of those autobiographies, is the change of the first name after the marriage. Women willingly accepted new culture, new environment and completely new name after their marriage. Along with her name a woman's original identity is shattered after her marriage.

One more notable point about women's autobiography is the age at which these autobiographies are written. Virginia Wolf had recorded in her diary that she was forty years old when she found that she could talk freely about herself and her life. It is remarkable that women generally like to indulge in the act of self creation when they reach their middle ages. To confront the society, one needs either the energetic youthful attitude or the shrewd, calm and calculating mind of the middle age. Erik Eriksson has observed that autobiographies *"are written at certain late stage of life for the purpose of recreating oneself in the image of one's own method and they are written to make that image convincing."*

In her early life woman is involved in her responsibilities, duties and preoccupation. Hence, she forgets her 'self'.

“She forgets her individual existence and becomes one with the surroundings. But once, when she is comfortable with her circumstances, she may well for the first time be woman herself.”

If we take a look at some of the women autobiographies, we find that most of them were written during their middle age. For instance, Sunity Devee wrote *"The Autobiography of an Indian Princess"* at the age of fifty. Dhanwanti Ramu Rau wrote her life story *"An Inheritance"* when she was eighty. Shoilbala Das Wrote *"A look Before and After"* at the age of eighty-two. *"The Scope of Happiness"* was written by Vijaylakshmi Pandit when she was seventy-five years old.

“Women are well beyond youth when they begin often unconsciously to create another story.”

In her sixteenth year, Amrita started writing poems secretly and tore them, as she was afraid of her father. He encouraged her to write but insisted that she should write only religious and patriotic poems. Fathers in those days were the patriarchs of discipline and order for daughters and there was no alternative than to follow the ruler obediently. The similar problems faced by Kamala Das at sixteen when she got married to Madhav Das. Her cousin who was an elderly person and encouraged her to write but her main source of inspiration for writing poetry is her grandmother, Nallappa amma, who herself was a noted poet. In addition, her grandfather too was a famous poet of Malayalam poetry in those days. In case of Shobhaa De, similar problems have aroused with her parents. Her father was a strict administrator, had imposed conditions on her attitudes, fashion, and activates. As Shobhaa has written in her memoir,

"I supposed that was part of the thrill, given the long list of don'ts. I was not allowed to wear sleeveless blouses, cut my hair in a fringe, use make up, listen to the western music station of All India Radio, dance (by myself) wear or perfume, jeans or grown-up outfits or behave in any manner that might attract attention.''

Pritam's autobiography maintains cent-percent balance between the contemporary events and personal feelings. She has presented a vivid portrayal of the partition experience of 1947 not only in her novels but also in her life-story. Nevertheless, she has never dissolved her self portrayal in narrating other events. Her life-story centers round a fragile, sensitive human being who is not only a writer but a very tender hearted woman and a mother. She celebrates femininity. In 'Revenue Stamp' Amrita very poignantly narrates her role as a writer as well as a woman. Generally, she considers Pritam – the Woman, secondary to Pritam – the writer. Nevertheless, there are three incidents in her life when Pritam-the woman supersedes Pritam-the writer.

She confesses that Pritam-the writer has helped her discover Pritam- the woman. The first incident is related to her dreaming of a child with her face with finely chiseled features when she had none. Sometimes while watering plants in her garden, she found this child springing up instead of a flower from the plant. Here she remarks that, if she could not become a mother, could find no meaning at all in life. Further, a woman in her comes to the forefront when she healed Sahir by rubbing Vicks on his throat and chest in his illness. The mere contact had rendered her into a complete woman. Thirdly, a woman in her is aroused when Imroz dipped his brush into the red paint and dubbed a mark on her forehead. Thus, Amrita Pritam has rediscovered a real woman in her. Her treatment is realistic as well as literary. Through her artistic touch she has revealed herself as a writer as well as a woman. Thus, Pritam's autobiography is a well-documented account of the self.

Thus Pritam is truthful to herself. To reveal one's life story with a transparency is very difficult task. Pritam has exposed her inner feelings with a great precision.

Conflict is the predominant component of any literary genre. Without conflict literature cannot be created. There is a vast difference between conflict expressed in fictitious literature

and the conflict expressed in life story. In other forms of literature conflict arises in the imaginative world of action. In autobiography the author himself is the center of the conflict. The conflict is intense when the writer is a woman and that too a revolutionary one life Amrita Pritam. Nevertheless, Amrita has treated the conflict in the most individual way. She has no regrets. She confronted conflict in dual way. Here was a search for true love. In this search. She faced internal conflict as well as external conflict. Being locked in a loveless marriage to a businessman at the age of sixteen, Pritam fell in love with the poet Sahir Ludhianvi, leafing through her life story we do not feel that she has complaints for her husband Mr. Pritam Singhji, whose name is attached to her till her death. In 1960 she took divorce and started living on her own terms. She nurtured a silent intimate relationship with Saheer for many years.

When she saw Saheer's photograph with his new girl friend on Blitz magazine; she was flabbergasted. She turned on the brink of madness. Her inner self was so much in conflict with herself that she was determined to commit a suicide. She had a nervous breakdown. The only thing that saved her was her poems.

"Way farer! Why did you the first time meet me at an evening hour! I am approaching the turning point of my life. If you had to meet me at all why did you not meet me at high noon when you would have felt its heat."

Amrita's life depicts struggles and difficulties in life of woman. Whatsoever life offered her, the one thing that did not let her down during the most depressing times was her pen. She observes:

"Whether I wrote my own thoughts down or wrote about partition, my pen was as much a part of me as the limbs of my body…."

There is a long and painful search for the true self. The same is true in the case of her heroines. There is no space for hypocrisy and snobbery in her life and in the lives of her characters. She firmly believed that truth brings harmony between the body and the mind. Thus, Amrita enjoyed her femininity from the very root. The writer in her always rejuvenated the woman in her.

With Kamala Das, we come across a new kind of woman's writing which is bold, daring, tantalizing and self-assertive. Here is a woman conscious of her femininity but determined to vindicate it against male supremacy. For Kamala Das it was important to be a woman and a lover with a body and soul. The autobiography becomes a vehicle for voicing an inner privacy.

"Kamala Das declared in the preface to the book 'My Story' is my autobiography." She began writing it during her first serious bout with heart disease. She observes: "The doctor thought that writing would distract my mind from the fear of sudden death and besides there were all the hospital bills to be taken care of."

The autobiographical form of writing helps to bring into focus “the search for self-delineation" through the “lifelines”. The journey into the past can be proved cathartic and is a catalyst for healing. ‘My Story’ is one such autobiographical journey which helped Das in coming to terms with herself and proved extremely cathartic:

“I have written several books in my lifetime, but none of them provided the pleasure the writing of ‘My Story’ has given me. I have nothing more to say.”

Kamala Das started writing her life story to distract her mind and to recover herself from illness. Nevertheless, she did not give a second thought to her private life and *“found the courage to move forward into as yet unnarrated and unexplored ways of living.”*

Generally, for an autobiographer, the factual truth is subordinated to the truth about himself. ‘My Story’ is a life narrative of Das’ inner journey. It is a search for an identity. It is an identity of the split self-craving for true love. We find introspection and self-analysis in her life story. While searching the true self, she is aware of her being as a woman and expresses the limitations of her gender in the poem *"The conflagration"* in a very acidic tone. She observes:

“Woman is this happiness, this lying buried beneath a man? It’s time again to come alive.

It’s time again to come alive.

The world extends a lot beyond his six-foot frame.”

Thus, Kamala Das, while talking about herself relates herself to women in general. Definitely her autobiographical account is narrated objectively but her self-portrayal is at the center. Hence, one can say that there is marvelous self-analysis, introspection and to some extent self-centeredness in her autobiography. Memory is the base on which an autobiographer builds up the story of his/her past and connects it with the present. An autobiographer must have powerful memory to recollect his/her story. Digging up her memory lane, Kamala Das begins her story with the depiction of her childhood and adolescent period.

The chosen texts, as vehicles of social change and promoters of unconventional articulations, reflect the natural progressive links in the tradition of new woman's wholesome growth. Here women work as agencies to bring change through their autobiographies. All of them challenge the position and place of women in orthodox Indian society. Through her autobiography Amrita Pritam has truly presented transforming the lives of women, by revising and re-writing conventional images of women inherited from patriarchal, cultural and linguistic structures. Her secessionist writings posed a natural threat to the patriarchal structure, and she emerged as a potential role model for the Punjabi women writers as well as for other women. She succeeded in intoning the long muted voice of the woman, seeking human dignity and progression from womanhood to personhood. Her writings broke the hegemony which made women feel that their own sense of reality is at odds with the reality

they are expected to conform to. The writing of an insurgent, her story paved the way for a peculiarly female idiom, which made a significant contribution to the creation of a visible female tradition in Punjabi literature. She put women into the text. wiping off the male written history and sketching a new her story.

The main aim of autobiography is to introduce ourselves to the self of the writer. Its aim is not to delight. It has shattered the ancient belief that the writer should be well known and renowned figure of the society. The most important aspect of an autobiography is the individuality of the experience and expression. Sometimes trivialities of life can produce invaluable emotions. Self becomes most important at that time. So glorification of self i.e. humanism is reflected in all these autobiographies. Amrita Pritam relishes the taste of life out of smoking the cigarette but left by the lover saheer. It has been rightly said:

"To have led an interesting life is a definite advantage but to be interested In life is real essential."

Carlyle Has rightly said, *"A well written life is almost as rare as a well spent one"*

This search for self is sometimes cathartic and a catalyst for healing. When one is reliving life, there are chances to eliminate those parts which one is unwilling to live and sometimes self becomes a stranger to the writer. Kamala Das rightly expresses that dialogue with the self reveals the urges, yearnings and inner longings-

"One's real world is not what is outside him. It is the immeasurable world inside him that is real only the one, who has decided to travel inwards, will realize that his route has no end"

Kamala Das depicts her inner self candidly whether factual or fictional, this truth becomes a universal truth when the author is expressing the inner self most potently in her poems.

Identity of the split self craving for true love becomes identical in Kamala Das, Amrita Pritam, Shobhaa De. All of them express it in their personal ways Shobhaa De comments – *"We earn, we travel, we splurge and we weep."*

She may be a pornographer for entire critics community, but the mother in her is so sensitive - *"When my daughter's sixth grade teacher rejects her assignment I feel crushed and terribly hurt."*

Here is a subaltern speaking of a special community – no doubt film stars, to the rest of the world. She not only looks at her own self most candidly and sharply, but also throws light on the world of glamour as *"brush, affluent and ambiguous with hy-zinks follies neuroses"*

She belongs to past colonial Indian women writers who are innovative, experimental, confessional and realistic. She is an epitome of the women of past independence era who is liberated, brave, educated in contrast to pre independence women who is docile, tortured and

conformist. Apart from her writing life achievements, experiences she expresses herself in the form of a daughter, mother, wife, sister.

Relationship with their siblings of each of these writers is good. Shobhaa De, Gayatri Devi, Kamala Das & Nayantara Sahgal. Kamala Das, Gayatri Devi, Jhamak Ghimire, Taslima Nasreen and Malala are nostalgic when they have reminiscences of their childhood with their brothers. They all are feministic, but liberally as their relationship with the males in family is harmonious. Gayatri Devi, Nayantara Sahgal, Shobhaa De and Malala have sweet remembrance of cordial relationship between parents, but Kamala Das and Taslima Nasreen are victims of disharmony in family, as her parents are never in good terms. Theory of Lacan mirror stage fits all these writers as they are influenced by their mothers.

Mirror stage is the theme of many of the works of Amrita Pritam, as she admits in Revenue Stamp, and the subject of most of the poems of Kamala Das and the protagonists of the novels of Shobhaa De. Nayantara Sahgal is also too much attached with her mother. Part one of her autobiography is covering the tower image of her mother who had a great influence upon the young mind of Nayantara. Amrita Pritam too at the death bed of her mother renounced god when her mother's breath was not restored despite of her prayer to God. Malala and Taslima Nasrin have been close to their mothers, while Jhamak Ghimire was influenced by her grandmother.

The characters in Tiwana's novels and short-stories are the downtrodden and the innocent rural folk with suppressed desires and passions. Tragedy and irony mark the main elements of her fiction. Complex inner duality of the female psyche is the chief theme of Tiwana. Besides her achievement in fiction, Tiwana wrote two books on literary criticism too.

Dalip Kaur Tiwana is one of the most distinguished Punjabi novelists, who writes about rural and innocent women's physical, psychological and emotional sufferings in a patriarchal society. As a woman she feels women's sufferings, problems, barricades in the path of progress as well as the unrecognized capabilities in her. Dalip Kaur Tiwana has observed Indian male dominated society very closely and has much understanding of social and ugly marginalization of women. She can be considered a social reformer as she is concerned with human conditions and devises for the betterment of women's condition in Indian Punjabi families. This chapter focuses on the theme of feminist landscape. It presents the miserable plight of women characters she has come across since her childhood. Women, who feel marginalized, alienated, isolated and detached in their lives, but are helpless as no law is there in the society to punish the outlaws. Dalip Kaur Tiwana beautifully portrays the landscape of her mind. The chapter shows how Dalip Kaur Tiwana presents the unfortunate image of her mother, grandmother, aunts and some other obscure women who were unable to mete out justice during their life time.

Born at Rabbon village in Ludhiana district to a family of land-owners, Dalip Kaur Tiwana's talent blossomed in Patiala, the princely town where she studied, worked and penned fiction inspired by life around her. An author of more than 50 books of fiction besides

autobiographical writing and criticism, her second novel, Eho Hamara Jiwana (And Such Is Her Fate), published in 1968, telling the story of exploitation and suppression of women in rural Punjab, shot her into the forefront of fiction writers. The protagonist, Bhano, is one of

the most memorable though tragic heroines of Punjabi fiction.

In giving voice to voiceless women, she painted with a difference a feminist landscape without raising slogans or offering easy solutions. This novel brought the national Sahitya Akademi award to Tiwana and a lifelong appreciation and friendship with the grand dame of Punjabi letters, Amrita Pritam. The latter hailed the entrance of the downtrodden village woman Bhano into Punjabi fiction as revolution. It would not be wrong to say that in Bhano she achieved what Gurdial Singh has done in the classic Marhi Da Diva (The Last Flicker) in bringing forth the poignant tale of Jagseer, a landless labourer.

Rising above a traumatic personal life, she became the first woman to do a doctorate in Punjabi literature and was an inspiring professor to many including the celebrated poet Surjit Patar. She was also one of the few to have received recognition and awards at the state and national level, including the prestigious Saraswati Samman and the Padma Shri.

Yet the brave woman took the lead in the award-wapsi times by returning her Padma Shri to uphold her conviction. Many Punjabi writers followed her by returning the Sahitya Akademi awards. Asked why she did so and her candid reply was, “This was the highest honour I had received so I felt obliged to return it.”

Always attired in salwar-kameez, her hair loosely plaited and most often a dupatta covering her head, Tiwana could have been just another aunty ji of the neighbourhood but for her probing mind and the strong pen she wielded in laying bare the oppression of people, women and men alike and thus rubbishing the fad that a writer must be Bohemian.

Once in an interview she said, “Readers often ask me why don’t my heroines revolt and my answer is that it is enough if the reader feels that they should rebel.” Her autobiography, Nange Pairan Da Safar (A Journey on Bare Feet), is yet another sensitive testament of a woman’s life told with restraint that made it all the more intense.

All these women autobiographers, namely Nayantara, Kamala Das, Amrita Pritam, Gayatri Devi and Taslima Nasreen can be called feminists in true sense as they challenged the dictates of male dominated society. At a time, when divorce was not thought to be a respectful thing, when tolerating every unnicety in the four walls of the house was thought to be decent, Shobhaa De, Amrita Pritam, Nayantara Sahgal and Taslima rebelled and took divorce. Both Amrita Pritam, Nayantara had live-in-relationship with their lovers for a long time before sanctifying it into marriages. Feminism raised its voice among these women writers when they wrote on bold themes. Amrita Pritam, Shobhaa De and Kamala Das and Taslima are very bold to narrate some events of their life which brought disgrace to their

family. The poems of Kamala Das and novels of Shobhaa De and novels of Taslima are often criticized for their bold themes.

This is the postcolonial and postmodern quality of them which make them ready to discard the beaten track and equip them with new themes and new modes of expression. If the fictitive qualities of autobiography have been blurred ever more productively, its theoretical qualities have also come in for increased exploration. Women have developed a separate tradition on the autobiographical genre, one in which selfhood comes out as a mediated entity influenced by the male discourse.

Female autobiographies have postmodernism in them as they challenge the traditional concepts of completeness of the Self and revolutionize the narrative practice, by offering new patterns of meaning which reject completeness, linearity and order in the name of randomness and chance. By delving into them the project reveals how feminist politics and postmodern aesthetics become inextricably linked, abandoning the presence of a single, reliable narrative voice in favor of the postmodern blurring of the boundaries between fact and fiction, history and myth.

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Chapter - IV

A Comparative Analysis of Male/Female Autobiographies

Men and women differ not only in the ethics of culture, morality, chastity and suffering but also in concept of writing autobiography. The critical theories on autobiography tend to marginalize women's autobiography- writing and often have a strong subjective as well as objective bias against it. This chapter is an attempt to prove that most of the critical theories established by the male tradition are not applicable to women's life writing due to biological, socio-political as well as psycho-cultural reasons; that women's autobiography-writing is different. For male individuation 'dissociation' is a must, while for women according to feminist psychoanalytic theorists like Chodorow and Rowbotham, 'association' is central to their individuation. Men's autobiography inform, is dominated by an 'I' and this 'I' is always at the center of every incident.

While women's autobiography differs in that it goes in circles. She does not stand at the center; there is often a man at the center and she is in the periphery with a dotted 'I' (Benstock).

Gusdorfs concept of autobiography is focused on the model of self that is essentially western and individualistic. One starts dissociating oneself from the others and tends to think of himself as the center of a living space. In a sharp contrast to the theories of Gusdorf and Olney, the psychoanalysts like Freud and Lacan focus on the development of the self through an intense interaction with the others. In Jacques Lacan's theory, the child's separation of himself from his mother is followed by the mirror-stage and a Narcissistic identification first with his own image and then with others. Individuation for women lies in association, while for men it lies in dissociation. In men's autobiography-writing 'I' is at the center of every incident, well defined, isolated and opposed to the world. But women's autobiography-writing projects a dotted 'i' which is on the periphery, collective, relational and representative of a class. Shari Benstock in her Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writing notes:

"The self that would reside at the center of the text is decentered and often is absent altogether in women's autobiographical texts. The very requirements of genre are put into question by the limits of gender - which is to say because these two terms are etymologically linked, genre; itself raises questions about gender."

Following Georges Gusdorf, other theorists of autobiography from Ronald Barthes to James Olney have persisted in maintaining the idea of centrally located isolate 'I' as the precondition for autobiography. *"Separate selfhood is the very motive of [autobiographical] creation",* asserted James Olney (Olney; 22). Under the influence of these critics there developed a school of critical thinking which valued autobiography as a genre of individualistic self. Naturally, this school believed that a culture which did not encourage individualistic image of

self would not provide proper soil to autobiography. Gusdorf had gone up to the extent of saying that in ancient civilization of the east the genre could not flourish at all because of the rejection of ego by those civilizations on metaphysical plane and whatever scattered autobiographical work was done in those countries was dismissed by him as nothing but "cultural transplant".

Lately, since 70's feminist theorists like Patricia Meyer Spacks, Estelle Jelinek, Shari Benstock, Nancy Chodorow, Sheila Rowbotham, Nancy Friedman and others have started questioning the traditional paradigm of isolate self on the ground that it doesn't take into consideration minority classes as, to quote Friedman:... the self, self-creation, and self-consciousness are profoundly different for women, minorities and many non-western peoples. The model of separate and unique selfhood that is highlighted in his [Gusdorfs] work and shared by other critics established a critical bias that leads to the misreading and marginalization of autobiographical texts by women and minorities in the process of canon formation.

According to these critics, the Gusdorfian theory of centrally located isolate selfhood supports restrictive and unspoken canon of White Male autobiographers. These male critics, notes Dr. Ranjana Harish in her essay "In the Cultural Hall of Mirrors: Issue of Gender Genre Incompatibility of Women's Autobiography" (1998) have advanced the understanding of autobiography greatly but their insistence on individualistic paradigms for the self have obscured the significance of women's autobiography-writing in literary tradition.

In Women's Consciousness, Man's World (1978) Rowbotham uses the metaphor of mirrors to describe the development of women's consciousness. But her mirror is the reflecting surface of cultural representation into which a woman stares to form an identity. A woman can not, Rowbotham argues, experience herself as an entirely unique entity because she is always aware of how she is defined as a woman, that is, as a member of a group whose identity has been defined by the dominant male culture. This sense of collective identity, however, can also be a source of strength and transformation, and lead not only to alienation, but also to the potential for a "new consciousness" of self. There is always this dual consciousness - the self as culturally defined and the self as different from cultural prescription, as Rowbotham notes in Woman's Consciousness, Man's World (1978):

“But always we were split in two, straddling silence, not sure where we could begin to find ourselves or one another. From this division, our material dislocation came the experience of one part of ourselves as strong, foreign and cut- off from the other which we encountered as tongue-tied paralysis about our own identity... the manner with ourselves was not variance with ourselves as an historical being-woman.”

Nancy Chodorow in her book Psychoanalysis - and the Sociology of Gender (1979) examines the psychology of gender socialization and suggests that the concept of isolate selfhood is inapplicable to women as they have, in her view, a relational identity and fluid ego

boundaries which mark their orientation to self, from that of men. Looking at the psychoanalytical theory from feminist perspectives, she argues:

"Growing girls come to define themselves as continuous with others; their experience of self contains more flexible and preamble ego boundaries and differentiation. The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world; the basic masculine sense of self is separate."

A woman forms her identity in relation to others. The socio-cultural set-up to of the patriarchy intensifies her traits of rationality and finally she emerges not as an individual but as a person with collective identity constantly aware of the society's prescription for her female self.

Benis Johnson Reagon identifies black women's autobiography- writing as 'Cultural Autobiography' because the story of a black woman's selfhood is inseparable from her sense of community. Mary Mason, in her essay "Autobiographies of Women Writers" (1980) argues that women's sense of self exists within a context of the deep awareness of others. The research in women's identity formation in the Indian context by the psycho analysts like Sudhir Kakar, Indira Parikh and Aashish Nandy support the theory of women's collective selfhood.

According to these psychoanalysts, instead of hampering their growth such a collective trait strengthens their personality. Women's autobiographies rarely mirror the establishment of the history of their times. They tend to concentrate on their personal rather than public lives and we are given domestic details, family problems, close friends and the people who influenced them. This is seen even in the case of women whose political life in their claim to fame. This is because, for a woman personal is political.

Patricia Meyer Spacks highlights this element of women's autobiography in her essay aptly called "Selves in Hiding" (1980). She discusses five most successful women's autobiographies and shows how these autobiographies are the "stories of unusual female achievement" but nevertheless "the narratives convey singular absence of personal satisfaction in achievement". All these five great women of public accomplishment; Emmeline Pankhurst, the English Suffragist; Dorothy Day, a founder of the radical 'Catholic Workers'; Emma Goldman, the fiery anarchist; Eleanor Roosevelt; and Golda Meir make the 'personal' more important than the 'public'. In Spack's view, by doing so these great achiever women "use autobiography paradoxically as a mode of self-denial".

Marginalization of women and their autobiography-writing is clearly reflected in all the autobiographies of the present study. In these celebrated autobiographies the writers present their inner self as well as external visible aspects of personality in a very effective and artistic style and full of details associated with their private lives, devoted to introspection and self-assessment.

The restrictive male view of history is that a good autobiography not only focuses on its author but also reveals his connectedness to the rest of history; it is representative of his times, a mirror to his era. This criterion is adequately supported by many male autobiographies which concentrate on chronicling the progress of their author's professional or intellectual lives, usually in the affairs of the world, and their life studies are for the most part success stories. Augustine's Confessions, an essentially philosophical document of his time, traces the vicissitudes of his spiritual progress until his successful conversion - Rousseau's Confessions (1781), Gibbon's Autobiography (1793), and Goethe's Poetry and Truth (1812 -31), though personal in some respects, are also success stories and can be read as histories of their era.

The emphasis by women on the personal, especially on other people, rather than on their own work life, their own professional success, or their own connectedness to current political or intellectual history clearly contradicts the established criterion about the content of autobiography. Women's autobiography projects an image of private strength and public passivity. It does not mirror the official history of the autobiographer's time. Thus, the belief that a good autobiography is always representative of its times and is a mirror to the era also does not hold true in relation to women's autobiographical writing. Women's writings, in this context, serve as reservoirs of social customs and traditions and can be treated as authentic data to do research in social sciences.

Besides this, women are more likely to write about their children in their autobiographies. The emotional and physical needs of children are essential aspects of female life studies. While male authored autobiographies mostly overlook personal life, especially details regarding wives and children. Male autobiographers mention their children but only briefly.

While man's autobiography projects a self-image of confidence and determination, the self-image constructed by woman is often the opposite. Men tend to idealize their lives or show how to cast them into heroic moulds to project their universal import. They may exaggerate, mythologize or monumentalize their boyhood and their entire lives. Perhaps for the fear of appearing sentimental, they often desist from revealing crisis in their childhood but are more likely to relate adult crisis, usually turning points in their professional lives. The self-image, thus projected is of confidence in contrast to the self-image projected in women's autobiographies which reveals se If -consciousness. Autobiography, especially a woman's autobiography, is a complex interplay of social structure and social content in the multiple network of relation through which the 'I' must compose, a 'self. To transform the private ambition into public record is always difficult for women. There is a special relationship between women and convention. It is demanded of a woman to be very meek and apologetic. She has to display her timidity and ask for assistance. As Freud defines, the term 'masculine' in psychology means 'active' and the term 'feminine' means passive. Women writers were confined to follow the social order that limits them.

Women project an acceptable self in their writings adopting the ideology of self-subordination, which implies among other things, suppression of narrative about the self.

Women's autobiographies, to a striking degree, fail directly to emphasize their own importance, though writing in a genre which values self-assertion and self-display. For women the immediate community is their family or neighbors. They tell of lives led by others' values and based on others' assumptions than their own. According to Mary Mason, 'other' or 'others' may be represented as husband, children, even God, but in all cases the female self depicted is as profoundly influenced by the 'other' i.e. 'delineation of identity by alterity' and this primary relationship structures their autobiography.

Jhamak brings up many other issues that Nepali women face, through her own life and that of the women surrounding her. She expounds on the value of work, and she concludes that every person, especially a woman, must earn her own living so that she is not a burden to anyone else. Jhamak has managed to take care of herself and earn for herself through her writing, and in doing so, has proved to be an inspiration for other disabled people as well. In fact she is the beacon of hope for all the disabled people of the world.

Jhamak gains a deep knowledge of many other human mysteries. When news got around that a disabled girl had learnt to read and write, people started worshipping her as the goddess Saraswati, Hindu deity of knowledge. Jhamak realizes that this is how religions are made. Gods must have been human once, and they were probably idolized for their extraordinary talents, she muses. As a child she had heard many stories of wishes being fulfilled by gods. She describes being influenced by the story of Dhruva and Prahlad, two children who were great devotees of Lord Vishnu, and were rewarded with a lot of affection from the gods. When her own wishes did not come true, she became disenchanted of the gods.

But in her own way, Jhamak’s wishes came true. Though humiliated by the society at the beginning, she is now lauded by people far and wide, all over the nation, for her talent and determination. Her salvation came not through gods, but through her own efforts, and once again, it instills hopes in all of us to trust ourselves instead of putting vain hopes on unknown supernatural forces.

Despite her hard life and disenchantment with the values of popular society, what stands out in the end is Jhamak’s fervent belief in the beauty of life, her desperate struggles to read, write, and be heard, which eventually succeeded because of her determination. She learnt to read just by seeing her sister read, and she practiced either on the open ground, or on the discarded notebooks of Mina. For every bitter word that she addresses at a person, she does not forget to add a warm word to make them human. She finds her father, mother and grandmother, all guilty of neglecting and abusing her, to the point of beating her up with sticks, but she also does not fail to mention their kindness to her, their moments of love that drew tears from her eyes, and that makes them human in our eyes. In the end, what stands out is that Jhamak, despite her life being riddles with problems, still dares to call it a flower, and not a thorn, because in whatever form it is, life gives joy, and it is beautiful. Jhamak has done what many of her senior writers have struggled for ages: she has been brutally honest without caring for the conventions of the society. This disarming honesty will be the standard that all writers will have to live up to in the future, because only with such honesty can we connect to

each other and share our problems, and only then does writing fulfill its potential. Jhamak's style of writing differs from males, as she mentions her struggles more than her success.

All these women autobiographers tell of lives of either their family or children, misbehavior of family members to them. Jamak is describing grumbling of his grandma, misbehavior of father and passiveness of mother. Shoba De describes most of the time her relationship with father mother and siblings. About one third part of the autobiography contains the description of celebrities of film industry. The later part of her autobiographies mentions her second husband and her children. Kamla Das describes her parented house relatives and childhood friends. She has grudge for the selfishness of her relatives. The non-cooperation and misbehavior of her relatives of Nalpat house. Malala describes political situations and history of country in more than half of book. Her own story covers very few pages of the autobiography. Gayatri Devi is obsessed with the presence of either her brothers or with Jai, her husband the king. Still her autobiography can be called an autobiography in real sense and trace account of inside of her life in a chronological manner. She has no regrets, no nightmares or no grudges. Hers can be called a happy life full of satisfaction, calm, complacence. Amrita Pritam's story contains the trauma of partition, faithlessness of her lover Sahil and attitude of mails towards a single female who is rising to success. The latter half of her autobiography contains travel stories and maybe called travelogue.

Taslima Nasreen autobiography is over shadowed by charismatic personality of her Mama Jawahar Lal Nehru and her mother Vijay Laxmi Pandit. All these women writers have given more space on the pages of their life story to the family members, friends of their family. Their own personalities are eclipsed in the drizzle of relatives.

On the other hand, men depict their childhood as idylls of innocence and redemption and their lives as heroic. The productivity of men toward embellishing their autobiography results in the projection of a self-image of confidence, no matter what difficulties they have encountered. This is contrary to the self-image projected in women's autobiographies. They reveal self-consciousness and a need to sift through their lives for explanation and understanding. The autobiographical intention is often powered by the motive to convince readers of their self-worth, to clarify, to affirm, and to authenticate their self image. Thus, idealization is not typical of the female mode. In place of glowing narratives, women tend to write in a straight forward and objective manner about both their girlhood and adult experiences. They also write obliquely, elliptically or humorously in order to camouflage their feelings, the same technique is used to play down their professional lives.

Coming to the discussion of narrative techniques and architectonics of the genre of autobiography, critics have often asserted that the male autobiographers consciously shape the events of their lives into a coherent whole. By means of chronological, linear narrative, they unify their work concentrating on one period of their life, one theme, or one characteristic of their personality. It is not surprising that with men socially conditioned to pursue the single goal of a successful career, we find such harmony and orderliness in their autobiographies. Such unity shows a faith in the unity of the world and their own self-images.

The "unidirectionality" of men's lives is appropriately cast into such progressive narratives, notes Jelinek.

On the other hand, irregularity rather than orderliness is seen in women's autobiography-writing. The narratives of their lives are often not chronological and progressive but disconnected, fragmentary, or organized into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters. The multidimensionality of women's socially conditioned roles seems to have established a pattern of diffusion and diversity when they write their autobiographies as well. Thus, the established critical standards exclude women's autobiography-writing from the genre and cast into the "nonartistic" categories of memoir, reminiscence, and other such forms.

In a very interesting study, titled Women's Autobiographies (1980) Estelle Jelinek shows the gender specificity of autobiography as a form by citing examples of famous male and female autobiographers. The earliest male autobiographer, Augustine, narrates his life story progressively up to the time of his conversion and than crowns it with three chapters of brilliant intellectual analysis. Rousseau's Confessions, however excessively detailed, are persistently chronological and progressive. Franklin wrote his autobiography during several sittings over a period of eighteen years, yet resuming the narrative each time where he had left off. Goethe's autobiography, also written over a number of years, is methodically chronological. To add Indian male autobiographers in the same context one may think of Gandhi, Nehru, Chagla, Deshmukh, Morarji Desai, A P J Abdul Kalam and many others.

All these men narratologically structure their autobiography with a single-minded focal point. Hence, they succeed in producing an aesthetic experience of a perfect art form.

All these male autobiographers proceed linearly with no miscellaneous forms to disrupt the orderly time sequence or the style. Compared to the above male authors women autobiographers lack the perfection of form. The earliest self narratives by women, like the one by Margery Kempe (1436) is constantly interrupted by her long apostrophes to God and by descriptions of her many weeping fits. Teresa's life story is broken with a long dissertation on prayer and with sporadic descriptions of her raptures; and Stanton's history is interrupted by anecdotes, portraits of people, and quoted letters and articles of her own and by others.

One can trace the same kind of fragmentation and disorderliness in the structure of autobiography in all these autobiographies of Indian women like Amrita Pritam – The Revenue Stamp, Kamala Das- My Story, Shobha De – Selective Memory, Gayatri Devi – The Princess Remembers, Nayantara Sahagal – Prison and Chocolate Cake and From Fear Set Free, Malala – I am Malala, Taslima Nasreen – Exile and Amer Meybella, Jhamak Ghimire – A flower in the midst of thrones.

None of them structure their autobiography in a continuous, uninterrupted narrative. To quote Jelinek, from her Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism:

"From earliest times, these discontinuous forms have been important to women because they are analogous to the fragmented, interrupted, and formless nature of their lives."

Thus, the final criterion of orderliness, wholeness or a harmonious shaping with which critics characterize autobiography is often not applicable to women's autobiography-writings. One may not recognize women's autobiography-writing as uniform, but it also can not be condemned as formless because it does have a curious form of its own. It attests what Estelle Jelinek calls:

"The continuous female tradition of discontinuity in women's autobiographical writing".

In a sharp contrast to the theories of Gusdorf and Olney, the psychoanalysts like Freud and Lacan focus on the development of the self through an intense interaction with the others. In Jacques Lacan's theory, the child's separation of himself from his mother is followed by the mirror-stage and a Narcissistic identification first with his own image and then with others. All the female autobiographers go through the mirror stage and identify themselves either with their mother or father. Shobha De and Kamla Das focus whole of the story either on personal life relations, husbands or surrounding people while Amrita's is a torn personality between Self and Sahir. Shobha De shared her 'self' with kiths and kins and presents her childhood experience in the following way:

"My sister tells me I was an unsufferable brat at that age constantly whining and clinging to my mother."

Jhamak Ghimire shares herself with her sister (Mina). She comes out of the mirror stage as the talent of her is finding an outlet in the form of her poems. She expresses her mental condition in the following words. "I could understand everything, perceive and sense everything. I would feel that I was becoming a burden on my family and relatives. I would despise living like a burden on anyone."

Taslima Nasreen's selfhood development, when she come out of the clothes of her father, started living in a hostel. Through she was feeling hollow and blank, and missed her mother. Her autobiography has many stories running parallel, telling the stories atrocities for the girl members of the family whether they are servant or master. At an early age, she had learnt what it was a girl child in the family. As she says "To be Baba was as distant as Allah. I felt a lot happier when was not around and any mention of Allah, formless and shapeless as he was poor. They also caused me much discomfort."

If Asian writers' history is introspected, we find that men wrote what they called atmacharit, 'self-introductions'; their use of the phrase charit related their efforts to the long-established hagiographical tradition of charit literature that narrated the lives of important men. Male autobiographers, select their own lives as the epitome of their times. Women did not feel what happened to them was important enough for charits. They wrote as wives, mothers, and occasionally daughters.

The autobiographies depict the hidden form of inwardness and the writer has to establish the portrait of the self in the public eye. One has to consider whether a woman reveals her unique self-indulges in self- exploration. The selected women autobiographies deal with the various relationships like those with their parents, siblings and with her spouse, children and other women of her family set up. Her identity is established only because of these relationships in her life.

Maharani Gayatri Devi describes her life story in the periphery of siblings and mother in childhood, her husband in youth and politics and people in the growing age. She recollects her childhood days with glee:

"The bedroom was crowded with maids, female relatives, friends and us children, she held court for us all……"

In Narasimhaih's view the words which remind one of the opening of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice prepare the readers for a good laugh as the autobiographer Nehru displays great capacity for self-introspection and have a good laugh at himself in the very first opening sentence of the volume. Such a rare capacity to discover and digest truths only could have inspired the famous painter friend of Nehru summed up her response to Nehru's autobiography when she wrote:

"I like your autobiography; where others would have said 'the sea saw me', you say 'I saw the sea' a living space. In Preface to his Autobiography, Nehru asserts that he is an individual living his separate life amidst the masses of humanity."

The autobiographies of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Kripalani and C. D. Deshmukh, on the other hand, focus on the public rather than the personal aspects of their lives. Their autobiographies are representative of their times, a mirror to the era of Indian freedom struggle. This criterion is adequately supported by these male autobiographies which concentrate on chronicling the progress of their author's professional or intellectual lives, and their life studies are for the most part success stories.

Like the other male autobiographers Gandhi dissociates himself from his family, friends, community, fellow workers, and so on in The Story of My Experiments with Truth. Individuation for Gandhi lay in dissociation. Gandhi asserted his conviction against the prevalent social conventions and customs. Gandhi dissociated himself from others. In My Experiments with Truth, he dissociates himself from his family, community, colleagues, and even the Indian National Congress.

My Experiments with Truth focuses more on the public than on the personal. Gandhi is a political leader, social reformer, and spiritual seeker combined into one. He devotes full chapters to his political views, political events and personalities. For example, he discusses in detail the Natal Indian Congress, Lord Curzon's Durbar, the Kheda Satyagraha, the Khilafat Movement, and the Amritsar Congress etc. Gandhi's autobiography, however, gives an

impression that in his quest for spirituality and truth, the personal, domestic aspects of his life are relegated into the background.

Gandhi is himself fully aware of the impact of his political life on the personal but he justifies his relegation of the personal to the political. Howsoever Gandhi may justify the sacrifice of the personal life; it was his family that bore the brunt of his political and spiritual experiments.

The self-image projected by Gandhi in The Story of My Experiments with Truth is of confidence and determination. The depiction of self-image by Gandhi in the early part of his autobiography seems to defy the notion that men project the self-image of confidence and determination in autobiography writing. His autobiography reminds us of the confessional autobiographies of the earliest autobiographies like St. Augustine's. The self-image of consciousness apparent in the early part of My Experiments with Truth is disproved by the monumental work he undertook later. It would be almost impossible to measure confidence of the man who confronts and challenges the erstwhile British Empire, the most powerful one in the modern world. Gandhi claims that the reader will benefit from the account of his experiments with truth. He was confident that his autobiography would influence generations of people. There is an undertone in Gandhi's autobiography that his existence is significant to the world.

Mahatma Gandhi's My Experiments with Truth covers the first five decades of Gandhi's life from his birth in 1869 to 1921. It is a connected account of his experiments with truth, non-violence, celibacy, self-purification, humility etc. My Experiments with Truth identifies itself with the male tradition of uniformity in form and content in autobiography-writing. It conveys the impression of a chronological linear narrative shaping the events of his life into a coherent whole. The autobiography is divided into five parts which are subdivided into chapters. The uniformity is evident in his concentration on one period of his life, one theme, or one aspect of his personality at a time. This is in accordance with the male tradition of autobiography writing.

My Experiments with Truth testifies the male autobiographical canon that the autobiographers consciously shape the events of their lives into a coherent whole by means of chronological linear narrative. This orderliness in Gandhi's My Experiments with Truth is evident because as a man he is conditioned to pursue the single goal of a successful career. Jawaharlal Nehru's An Autobiography is considered by the critics as one of the outstanding prose works in the annals of Indian writing in English. Written at the age of forty -five, it is a literary expression of a man at the height of his powers. Nehru's An Autobiography attests the male critical theories. From his very childhood, he starts dissociating from others and projects himself as the center of a living space. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote his entire autobiography in prison; " ... in the long solitudes of goal life" (Preface). Initially he dissociates from his father, Motilal Nehru. When Jawaharlal's autobiography provides a detailed description of the freedom struggle and the role he played in it. In An Autobiography, we note that the personal history is fused with the national history, and we are privileged to watch the development of

Jawaharlal' s character, personality in the context of the drama of the national struggle. He sought satisfaction in his work and rushed about from end to end in India:

"I carried about me microphones and loud speakers and addressed a dozen meetings a day, apart from impromptu gatherings by the road side. Some mammoth gatherings approached a hundred thousand; the average audience was usually twenty thousand. The daily total of persons attending was frequently a hundred thousand and sometimes it was much greater. In a rough estimate it can be said that ten million people actually attended the meetings I addressed, and probably several million more were brought into some kind of touch with me during my journeying by road."

Jawaharlal Nehru's An Autobiography, thus, projects an image of self-confidence and determination. Nehru's autobiography portrays him as the son of a wealthy Indian barrister and politician Motilal Nehru who became a leader of the left-wing of the Indian National Congress at a remarkably young age. Congress President, under the mentorship of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru projects the self-image of charismatic, radical leader, advocating complete independence from the British Empire. Jawaharlal Nehru was a pivotal figure in the Indian independence movement.

In contrast to the self-image in the autobiographies of women writers discussed in the present study, which reveal self consciousness; Nehru's active role in the Indian freedom struggle and the prevailing social conventions lead to the projection of the confident self image:

"It was true that I had achieved, almost accidentally as it were, an unusual degree of popularity with the masses; I was appreciated by the intelligentsia; and to young men and women I was a bit of a hero, and a halo of romance seemed to surround me in their eyes. Songs had been written about me, and the most impossible and ridiculous legends had grown up. Even my opponents had put in a good word for me and patronizingly admitted that I was not lacking in competence or in good faith.

Only a saint, perhaps, or an inhuman monster could survive all this, unscathed and unaffected, and I can place myself in neither of these categories. It went to my head, intoxicated me a little, and gave me confidence and strength. Father's personal valet for many years, Bhola Ram, belonged to the Harijan community, and Hari Lal, my brother's valet, also an "untouchable," became well known in his own right as a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislature. My own cook, Budhilal, who has been with the family for forty- three years, and his brother, Tulsi Ram, who served my brother until he died, both Harijans, are to us the equal of any Brahman of the highest group. It is a joy as well as a matter of pride that their children are educated, hold good positions, and have considerably raised their standard of living because of our encouragement and trust. In the Uttar Pradesh Assembly one of the able younger ministers is a lawyer and the grandson of one of Anand Bhawan employees. He was a Harijan, known technically as a member of the scheduled class. There are others also, who, but for the fact that my father had the courage of his convictions, would not have been able to make good as they have done. Parliamentary debates and demands asking for a better

deal for Harijans seem hypocritical to me. If those who shouted loudest had done one fraction of what my father did more than half a century ago the problem, bynow, would have been resolved and all Hindus emotionally and socially integrated."

However, in Nayantara Sahgal's autobiography Prison and Chocolate Cake and From Fear Set Free, there is no documentation of politics for posterity. The personal- family, friends, domestic affairs, family problems- is always ahead of the political. Returning from the United States after the completion of her studies, Nayantara was eager to see Jawaharlal Nehru who had become the first Prime Minister of independent India by that time. However, his political position did not mean much to her. She always looked for her Mamu with whom she had played as a child. When Nayantara and her sister Lekha went to the USA for higher education, India was still a British colony. When she was returning home, the country had gained independence. Her mother was in Moscow as the first ambassador of the newly independent country to Russia. On her arrival in India, Nayantara was supposed to stay at the official residence of her Mamu who had become the first Prime Minister. She had never visited New Delhi till then. She writes in Prison and Chocolate Cake:

"As I thought about going home, I gradually became more accustomed to the idea. So much had happened since I had come to America and now Mamu was the Prime Minister, the first Prime Minister of an independent India! I repeated it over and over again to myself in wonder and awe, not quite believing it. It was a distant, dazzling title. It spelt victory after a long, hard, sad battle, but to me it had no reality. What had reality was Jawaharlal Nehru, the Mamu I had played with and known and loved. He was infinitely more inspiring than the Prime Minister of India. Suddenly I was eager and impatient to be with him again. I had been the ardent little hero-worshipper, trudging solidly behind him in the make-believe processions of our games. Now I was ready to walk beside him towards whatever future the building of a New India would involve."

Jawaharlal Nehru's intention in writing the autobiography as he says in the Preface "was to trace his own mental development and not to write a survey of recent Indian history". But, as can be easily seen, history has invariably crept in, in this account of his life. In fact, most of the six hundred and odd pages of the book are taken up with the historical events of the Indian national struggle. Nehru's autobiography not only focuses on its author but also reveals his connectedness to the rest of the society: it is representative of his times, a mirror of his era. Nehru writes:

"Matters came to a head in the Congress at the presidential election early in 1939. Unfortunately Maulana Abut Kalam Azad refused to stand and Shubhas Chandra Bose was elected after a contest. This gave rise to all manner of complications and deadlocks which persisted for many months. At the Tripuri Congress there were unseemly scenes. I was at that time very low in spirit and it was difficult for me to carry on without a break-down. Political events, national and international happenings, affected me of course, but the immediate causes were unconnected with public affairs. I was disgusted with myself and in a press article I wrote: "I fear I give little satisfaction to them (my colleagues), and yet that is not

surprising, for I give little satisfaction to myself. It is not out of this stuff that leadership comes and the sooner my colleagues realized this the better for them and me. The mind functions efficiently enough, the intellect is trained to carry on through habit, but the springs that give life and vitality to that functioning seem to dry up."

V. K. Krishna Menon notes in his Unity of India:

"his treatment of the problems has given us much that is history, expressed with directness and simplicity, yet with great foresight and imagination."

Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography is a record of the impact of men and events, the subtle influence of places, the fascination of nature and the force of the current of history. It appears to be the testament of a whole generation. Personal history is merged with national history and we are privileged to watch the evolution of Jawaharlal's personality in the context of the drama of the national struggle.

The parallel between his personal history and the history of India is indicated in An Autobiography. Nehru says that:

"Indeed I often wonder if I represent any one at all, and I am inclined to think that I do not, though many have kindly and friendly feelings towards me. I have become a queer mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere. Perhaps my thoughts and approach to life are more akin to what is called Western than Eastern, but India clings to me, as she does to all her children, innumerable ways; and behind me lie, somewhere in the subconscious, racial memories of a hundred, of whatever the number may be generations of Brahmans. I cannot get rid of either that past inheritance or my recent acquisitions. They are both part of me, and, though they help me in;

both the East and the West, they also create in me a feeling of spiritual loneliness not only in public activities but in life itself. I am a stranger and alien in the West, I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling."

'An Autobiography' also reveals Nehru's faith in science and the scientific outlook, a faith partly inherited from his father who was keenly interested in practical science. In his autobiography, Nehru reiterates his faith in science "the great gift of the west" and is convinced that "it was a good thing for India to come in contact with scientific and industrial west". He further adds:

"What has been the record of British rule in India? Who are we to complain of its deficiencies when they were but the consequences of our own feelings? If we lose touch with the river of change and enter a backwater, become self-centered and self-satisfied, and, ostrich-like, ignore what happens elsewhere, we do so at our peril. The British came to us on the crest of a wave of new impulse in the world, and represented mighty historic forces which they themselves hardly realized. Are we to complain of the cyclone that uproots us and hurls

us about, or the cold wind that makes us shiver? Let us have done with the past and its bickering and face the future. To the British we must be grateful, for one splendid gift of which they were the bearers, the gift of science and its rich offspring. It is difficult, however, to forget or view with equanimity the efforts of the British Government in India to encourage the disruptive, obscurantist, reactionary, sectarian, and opportunist elements in the country. Perhaps that too is a needed test and challenge for us, and before India is reborn it will have to go through again and again the fire that cleanses and tempers and bums up the weak, the impure and the corrupt."

Nehru's social and political thought in An Autobiography is intimately connected with his belief in science. He admires the ideology of Marx because of "the scientific method he adopted". According to Jawaharlal, while all other systems and theories were groping about in the dark, Marxism alone offered a great solution to the world crisis. Nehru also gives a considerable space to the peasant and his plight; the 'zamindari' system; the exploitation of the peasant by the tax-gatherer; the destruction of cottage industries; the plight of artisans; and scenes of famine in the midst of plenty.

Nehru's autobiography, thus, has been an invaluable document as an account of historical events, outstanding contemporary personalities, world movements and the contribution of all this to our civilization. However, we feel that the autobiography unfortunately leaves many things unsaid. The emphasis is clearly on Nehru's public life and his personal life is relegated into the background. Mahadev Desai shrewdly observes: "Although Nehru is sincere, we have a feeling of something missing, something kept from us".

Nayantara Sahgal's autobiographies ‘Prison and Chocolate Cake’ and ‘From Fear Set Free’ reveal her consciousness as a woman in a male dominated society. She grew up at Anand Bhavan, the home of the Nehru family. For Nayantara and her mother Vijayalakshmi, 'home' always meant Anand Bhavan. But Nayantara remains instinctively conscious that her real home would be where her husband lives. When Nayantara leaves for the United States for higher education, her aunt Krishna comes to see her off at the Bombay port. Offering a parting advice to the niece, Krishna asks Nayantara "to look helpless but be efficient" so that people may give her a helping hand.

In From Fear Set Free, Nayantara is conscious of the difference in her and her husband's backgrounds. She is conscious that as children grown up at Anand Bhavan she and her sisters were cut off from ordinary life around them. Before her marriage with Gautam, she feels herself unfit for her husband's family: *"Life would be different for me from henceforward, and not only as it is different for any newly married woman. From the smallest detail to the overall picture, it would be strange. I should shift from orange juice to the cocktail circuit."*

Focusing on the purpose of writing 'An Autobiography' Nehru confidently asserts:

“My attempt was to trace, as far as I could, my own mental development, and not to write a survey of recent Indian history. The fact that this account resembles superficially such a

survey is apt to mislead the reader and lead him to attach a wider importance to it than a it deserves. I must warn him, therefore, that this account is wholly one-sided and, inevitably, egotistical~ many important happenings have been completely ignored and many important persons, who shaped events, have hardly been mentioned. In a real survey of past events this would have been inexcusable, but a personal account can claim this indulgence."

Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography provides us with very little information about his childhood and deals mainly with the adult crisis. An Autobiography begins with the description of Nehru's ancestors and their descent from Kashmir. This is followed by a very brief description of his childhood. The rest of the autobiography focuses on his adult crises, his significant role in the Indian freedom struggle. An Autobiography thus projects an image of self confidence presenting an unforgettable picture of the man and his milieu. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar notes in Indian Writing in English (1980):

It was a very personal book, being a sensitive individual's autobiography; on the contrary, it also struck one as the testament of a whole generation -the generation that was striving hard to negotiate the difficult passage from the dying old world to the new world that was struggling to be born.

Estelle C. Jelinek, in her Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism.. very interestingly notes that most autobiographers are achievers with self- sustaining ego systems, and not surprisingly, therefore, most are only children or the oldest child.

Nayantara Sahgal's autobiography Prison and Chocolate Cake also lacks the chronological order. The narrative moves back and forth in time. It begins with the description of herself and her sister Lekha's voyage to the United States for higher education. Then she goes on to describe the introduction of the Pandit girls to the national politics at a very early age. At the age of three Nayantara came to associate prison with chocolate cake as the occasion of her freedom fighter father's imprisonment was celebrated in the family with chocolate cake. Nayantara does not talk about her childhood and parentage in the established tradition found in male autobiographies. Prison and Chocolate Cake closes with Nayantara's return from the United States and the death of Mahatma Gandhi. From Fear Set Free, the sequel to Prison and Chocolate Cake, describes the eight years after her return to India- her courtship with Gautam Sahgal, her marriage, and her domestic life as a housewife. Once again the narrative in From Fear Set Free is disjointed, disconnected, and fragmentary. Nayantara justifies this lack of chronological order in the Preface to Prison and Chocolate Cake:

"If I write haphazardly it is because I describe events as I remember them and not necessarily in the order in which they occurred. It is putting together the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. The pattern forms in its own way as the relevant pieces are located and not in the neat, methodical way desired. Much of the atmosphere we knew as children is fast vanishing, for already Gandhiji's name is history and Anand Bhawan, our home in Allahabad, is a deserted house. Only a memory remains of the glamorous aura which once surrounded it. I have tried to recapture a little of that fading atmosphere."

Jawaharlal Nehru's An Autobiography, thus, shares uniformity in form and content with those of St.Augustine, Rousseau, Hume, Franklin, Gibbon and John Stuart Mill. It is considered as one of the most outstanding prose works in the annals of Indian writing in English. Written at the age of forty- five, An Autobiography is a literary expression of a man at the height of his powers. John Gunther, a journalist of world renown, thinks Nehru writes English as hardly half a dozen men alive can match. In addition to revealing several facets of Nehru's personality, the autobiography also gives us an unmistakable sense of the growth of the writer's mind.

Gusdorfian concept of autobiography is premised on a model of the self that starts dissociating oneself from the others and tends to think of him as the center of a living space, he thinks that his existence is significant to the world and that his death will leave the world incomplete. The autobiography, thus, projects a self-image of confidence and determination. According to Jelinek, men tend to idealize their lives to make it seem heroic and often desist from revealing crisis in their childhood. They are more likely to relate adult-crisis, usually turning points in their professional lives. The self-image, thus, projected is of confidence. The vision of self in women's autobiographies reflects their isolation, involvement and identity. In men's autobiographies this projection of self is missing. It is related, to the autobiographer's self- narrative as the writer to her book is. Amrita cites this illustration in the beginning of her autobiography. Life is a strange book, constructed by letters and sounds that combines and break, to scatter away and change. After a long journey of consciousness, then comes a point when one finds the courage of introspecting and scrutinizing all those past moments of failures and frustration of restless noon's and gloomy evenings of painful mornings and sleepless nights… through which one finds the hope of new sense of continuity and confidence to step forth to transcend the consciousness of *'I' was trading upon the sense of me."*

Amrita Pritam's vision of womanhood is so clear and without inhibitions. Her mind was communicative in its perceptions and she could visualize the male mind through her characters, she could also sympathize with their agonies. She never denied the gender orientation harshly as a feminist world. The recognition of gendered experiences and that of gender roles was felt by her as an artist more profoundly than any common being. She has been too sensitive to adopt the posture of a radical feminist. She seemed to offer some feminist implications in her philosophized observations of woman's identity and existence. In the same contemplative mood, she continues her analysis,

"I don't claim any ideal in womanhood. I do not idealize woman what is important for me is the mental set-up and its evaluation. The only difference between male mind and the female mind is that their drawbacks are different. Economy in man's control makes him forceful and imposing while the lack of power makes woman reserved jealous and slavish… I think slavery is a part of mind rather than gender. It is equally related to man as to woman… the difference is in face not in the mind."

Amrita Pritam is supremely confident of her originality as an artist and knows very well that a woman autobiographer's self-presentation is more significant as based an aesthetic order than on the historical factual details of events and temporal happenings. The Revenue Stamp is a like a shell in which the waves of her emotional crisis are still surging. Its, her lonely mind, that crept into the writings of her passionate verses, in quest for warmth and truthful self-investigation G D Narsimhiah has all admiration for her and observed,

"Amrita Pritam of India hardly had any to run down Indian society considering the Europhobia that surrounds her in and outside her language. Yet she permitted - herself to complain that it is easier for a woman to be accepted as a harlot than as a poet in Indian society."

For a sensitive poet like Amrita Pritam, it has been an instinctual - collaboration of the creative 'I' with the feminine 'I'. The Revenue Stamp is the record of her creativity and poetic career more than of the biographical or physical life experience. The re-publication of her autobiographical after a gap of Thirty years in the New form 'Akshoron ke Saye' proves the writers quest for progressive and mature manifestation of 'I' she calls it 'antaryatra' the journey of inner mind. As she writes,

"the voyage of my life and my contemplation consists in 'I' but it is endless and troublesome… many a times the gloom of melancholy darkens so much that one is afraid of missing the way… This is the voyage from 'I' to 'I' from slavory to love, from matter to conscience, from sand to sense from the limits to the limitless, that is from mutable to the eternal."

The feminist generalization, however, is not appropriate for Amrita Pritam's 'Revenue Stamp' it is true, as the beginning of the comment to assess or define the past as men, through autobiography, diverted from the common path, Amrita Pritam wrote herself story to fulfill what she calls

"The writer's own need. A conscious process leads to one reality to another."

It was a casual suggestion to her from the elderly author, Khushwat Singh that she should, write an autobiography exceptional in its reflection of her creativity the autobiography, metaphorically proved the 'Stamp' of self on her 'revalue of writings'. She narrates in her preface. One day Khushwat Singh casually said, "What is there in your life? Just one or two incidents.

"If you wish to write an autobiography the back of a Revenue stamp is sufficient space!"

He said 'a Revenue Stamp' probably to suggest that all other stamps keep changing their size. The Revenue Stamp remaining the same for lifetime. He was right whatever happened in my life, inside the depths of mind and it was all submitted to novels and poems,

“Then what remained? Still, I am writing some lines as if to place the revenue stamp upon the accounts of life; as if to confirm those rough writings finally as mine.”

Jhamak Ghimire's autobiography in comparison to male autobiographers is an account of her pains and sufferings because of her disability and deformity her periphery her family and friends. First half of the autobiography is related to her family life only including grandma, parents and siblings. The latter half of the autobiography relates her academic growth. She writes "I had to hold the pen, not out of my selfishness, neither did I have to use the pen by selling my soul. I use the pend for life. It appears that the country's internal conflicts greatly harass, although indirectly bear the brunt of the conflicts tolerated them.

“My goodness! what a great tragedy did the country have to pass through and especially those who became the victims of it directly! How could they tolerate? It seems people were in utter darkness.”

Jhamak Ghimire autobiography reflects the vision of herself and the form of the depiction of isolation, identify and expectation. The story is not linear but fragmentary the story is broken many times and lacks organic unity and chronological order. She has given the record of both her creativity as well as her physical dependency. Only one thing in her autobiography akin it to male autobiography and that is she gives importance to her work more than family life autobiography with this line, ‘As I pursue life's grandeur and effulgence, I speak through these lines’.

“May you be living under darkness, But I shall live such a life, such a life, that keeps on pursuing the brightness of moonlight. And case aside, past accursed times as rags. Let life be effulgent, bright as a light a glow, like a leaf made multi-hued by a dazzling moon, Like bright colors spread thereon.”

There is a lot of difference between the way men & women explore their selfhood or personal voices. Men relate their efforts to express long established tradition of 'Charitra' literature. They regard their life as the center of their times. They give self-importance. Their description is lover progressive and self-concealed. Women present themselves as wives, mothers or daughters. They can never come out of their feelings of depression, humbleness, sextual relation, family life or the behavior of male members in the society. As the title of the autobiography suggest no focuses on the possession of the girl in the society. As well as her own childhood is the central theme the title shows her special girlhood. It is a kind of self-discovery and self expression and denial to patriarchal authority. Through her own she is emphasizing other women's experiences of insert discrimination, exploitation and rejection. Her identity is concern and connected to the larger context of social relations.

A Journey on Bare Feet is a pathetic life story of Dalip Kaur Tiwana, a celebrated Punjabi writer. This book is considered an anthropological statement or study on feminine condition in the lower peasantry of Punjab. Dalip Kaur Tiwana has presented the miserable plight of oppressed women in a rural patriarchal set up of Punjab. Tiwana’s feminist framework

unfolds the subjective position of the voiceless and marginalized women, who are toiling creatures leading their lives as beasts of burden and as victims of dominant caste onslaught. It is but natural that they are mute.

The reader gets practical and genuine glimpses of the lives of women through the creative writing A Journey on Bare Feet of Tiwana, which is a historical memoir. She says in about the book:

"It is a history, history of those who have borne it (on their bodies) long before, it is written on the pages of history. This autobiography is dedicated in remembrance to those who have endured history on themselves."

Even if the narrative depicts Tiwana's life history, yet it is a history of Punjabi culture, rituals and beliefs as well. Although Tiwana's account is essentially personal, her struggle is the struggle of every Indian woman. Several concerns of women such as dowry, women's education, the general preference for sons and status of women, drinking habit of males, early marriage of girls, quarrel for property, polygamy in preindependence time, form an integral part of A Journey on Bare Feet. A Journey on Bare Feet consists of twenty seven chapters without specifying any date and year.

Based on its content, this autobiography precisely recounts Tiwana's life from 1935-1980. The time span of forty five years of Tiwana's life is beautifully woven in this work. Born on 4th May in 1935, Dalip Kaur Tiwana in A Journey on Bare Feet recounts her birth in a small village of Rabbon in Ludhiana district of Punjab, where she was brought up in a wealthy traditional family of prosperous zamindars. It was the time of pre-independence, there were several princely states in India. Punjab was one such, the then princely state of India which Tiwana describes in this autobiographical account. Tiwana in the backdrop of colonial times highlights the working of zamindari system in the Punjab province.

In her autobiography A Journey on Bare Feet, Tiwana first introduces us to her innocent, uneducated but humble grandmother. She is the central character of the book. Tiwana's grandmother was a simple woman from a Jatt family, married to a rich man, Hazura Singh. Living in a family of zamindars of great repute, her grandmother had never been accustomed to the lifestyle of opulence and grandeur of this royal family. This woman did not have enough money to buy a packet of matches. She was thought to be a menial by her younger daughter. The title of the book is after her , as her younger son got angry with her for going about the house in bare feet, and for wearing old and torn cloths. Afraid to look at her own daughter and son, she held the hand of her grand daughter. The dominance of her grandfather in the house was so much that she couldn't ask him to accompany her to Hardwar for a dip in the holy river Ganga. She represents Indian woman who is always in the grip of fear without any reason. Her grandmother taught Tiwana to live in fear of the Almighty and "his secret dispensation". Her grandmother had lived her life as a stereotyped image of the silent, suffering woman in a village patriarchy.

Her marginalized location in an oppressive, caste-ridden feudalistic society was not unknown to her. Tiwana described the extent of her grandmother's acceptance of her inferior position in a society she lived in by narrating an instance. She described when Tiwana's grandfather gave a sum of hundred rupees to his wife while going to Nabha, the whole of the night her grandmother could not asleep for fear of losing the money. All the time she kept worrying, "What if I lose it? My parents are in no position to make good the loss."

The writing of autobiography is conscious and continuous work for women writers. The contradictory generic conditions of from suit the female psyche so well that the form has a different kinship, with the feminine self. On one hand the auto biographer has to expose herself by exploiting the truth in its private shades, on the other, she has to justify and present herself as she prescribes herself to be. Sacrifice of privacy is the central demand of autobiography and it appears to be opposed to feminine culture. Very few woman writers have come forward with this dimension.

In light of the foregoing analysis of male and female autobiographies the researcher is of the view that these autobiographies uphold the gynocentric theory of "gender-difference" in autobiography-writing. Though having the same socio-political and economic backgrounds, man and woman project an essentially different orientation of 'self-image' in their autobiographies. "An Autobiography'', "My Experiments with Truth" by Nehru and Gandhi consistently focuses on the important role that they played in the contemporary public affairs. In contrast, women writers undermine their achievements to underscore the significance of personal affairs in their life. Given the evident "poetics of difference" in autobiographies of Nehru, Gandhi, Kamala Das, Amrita Pritam, Nayantara Sahgal and Shobhaa De, the researcher finds a confirmation of the theory that gender affects writing.

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Chapter - V

Conclusion

After India achieved freedom there came changes in Indian life. The new social scenario inspired creativity of the Indian writers in English as well as in other regional languages. Once the country become free and the society gained stability, people became candid and self- assertive. The social upheaval got expression not only in poetry and fiction but also in the autobiographies. The autobiographical genre got a new meaning and opened up new vistas of knowledge for all.

There are two factors brought up to demean any woman autobiographers: -

1. Autobiography as mere personal hysteria supported by Freud.

2. Autobiography as a fictional construct.

A woman's point of view would open for retrospection too many sacrosanct notions. For Helene Cixous, a woman's practice of writing has to be based on a very different order of meaning to that of phallocentric symbolic order. Cixous, through her critique, sets up a mode of "ecriture feminine" or writing the body. Contrary to the feminine as "lack" and absence, Cixous' writing practice epitomises it as myriad, immeasurable creative pageant, with its display of the tableau of the female body under whose effect the felicity of the text will annihilate all coercions and repressions normal by the society and is, often, ignored. A woman's point of view would open for retrospection too many sacrosanct notions. For Helene Cixous, a woman's practice of writing has to be based on a very different order of meaning to that of phallocentric symbolic order. Cixous, through her critique, sets up a mode of "ecriture feminine" or writing the body. Contrary to the feminine as "lack" and absence, Cixous' writing practice epitomises it as myriad, immeasurable creative pageant, with its display of the tableau of the female body under whose effect the felicity of the text will annihilate all coercions and repressions. The autobiographical works of women are a record of the eras and cultures in which they live. In the postcolonial era the status of woman has undergone a great change. Women are the pillars of culture, but are imprisoned in the walls of the family and shackled by tradition. The Indian women writers have voiced their feelings through their sensibilities, their awareness about feminine problems. It is the male society, which compels her to choose her roles according to its convenience. She if forced to act as either a slave or an idol the historical circumstances and the socio-cultural and political set up in India make women’s issues different from western feminist rhetoric.

Carolyn G. Heilbronn says that a woman’s life can be described in four ways:-

“The women herself may tell it, in what she chooses to call an autobiography; she may tell it in what she chooses to call fiction; a biographer, woman or man, may write a biography, or

the woman may write her own life in advance of living it, unconsciously and without realizing or naming the process."

We find that a deeper study of women's autobiographies unravel the hidden recesses of feminine psyche of Indian society. All these autobiographies reveal that woman has secondary position in the family and society. Whether she hails from higher class or lower class her destiny is same. Autobiographies from the time of Suniti Devi to Shobhaa De have the same script; pain, disappointment, helplessness and frustration. The women writers undertaken in this project are agents to bring change in the society. Through their autobiographies they have paved the way for progeny and acclaim that with willpower everything can be changed. The women writers undertaken in the present study and their autobiographies express glaring similarities and contrast in their not only attitude and linguistic skills but in portrayal of the surroundings, society and incidents witnessed by them of their era for e.g. Both Amrita Pritam and Kamala Das have had unconventional ways of thinking and have therefore become quite controversial. They do not conform to the established norms of the society; they defy them. They have revolted against the traditional man- woman relationship their attitude to sex is different from the puritanical attitude of their contemporaries. They challenge all the taboos. They disapprove of the conventional marriage of girls at an early age and the wide age gap between husband and wife.

Amrita Pritam's autobiography is shaded by her romantic idealism, which is self-imagined. In the world of self, she forgets the external drudgery of life, escapes into, and visions that inspire her creativity. Her autobiography reveals her courage of consideration and psychological insight yet believes in the intuitive knowledge of prophetic gestures and suggestive dreams.

Kamala Das, 'My Story' expresses the and distinction both as a woman and writer. Her other works are good but her autobiography is certainly better. It is written in the form of a novel, informative and delightful autobiography. It can be read as a confession. It is confession like St. Augustine 'confessions. It is the duty of a writer, to tell the truth. While writing his/her autobiography. In 'My Story' Kamala Das does not hide anything to her readers. She has experimented with her womanly truths like Mahatma Gandhi. There is poetic element like Jawaharlal Nehru. She has tales just like R.K. Narayan. The purpose, style, theme and design all are remarkable. She has proved that truth is always truth and it must be speak without any fear. It is necessary for a writer to revolt against the savage conventions. She has predicated her identity and individuality. Thus, 'My Story' is a revolutionary book. It is the story of a shameful society where males do not properly respect women.

In Case of Amrita Pritam, it is self- discovery of a perceptive mind. *'The Revenue Stamp'* reveals an uncommon sense of self-analysis with no conscious regard for social criteria of moral judgments. Being a poet; she maintains the grace of her creativity while narrating the story of her life. She now here tries to control even those facts of life, which give birth to hypocrisy in society. Her vision of life is broad enough to make her story the 'stamp of truth'.

Fathers played a significant role in the lives of these women writers. In her sixteenth year, Amrita started writing poems secretly and tore them, as she was afraid of her father. He encouraged her to write but insisted that she should write only religious and patriotic poems. Fathers in those days were the patriarchs of discipline and order for daughters and there was no alternative than to follow the ruler obediently. The similar problems faced by Kamala Das at sixteen when she got married to Madhav Das. Her cousin who was an elderly person and encouraged her to write but her main source of inspiration for writing poetry is her grandmother, Nallappa amma, who herself was a noted poet. In addition, her grandfather too was a famous poet of Malayalam poetry in those days. In case of Shobhaa De, similar problems have aroused with her parents. Her father was a strict administrator, had imposed conditions on her attitudes, fashion, and activates. As Shobhaa has written in her memoir,

"*I supposed that was part of the thrill, given the long list of don'ts. I was not allowed to wear sleeveless blouses, cut my hair in a fringe, use make up, listen to the western music station of All India Radio, dance (by myself) wear or perfume, jeans or grown-up outfits or behave in any manner that might attract attention.*''

Shobhaa narrates an incident where her father has scolded her. When Kunda got gold medal, he told her,

"It is your attitude, you have the aptitude and grasp. But no application, and how can you excel such a lackluster approach?"

However, she was rest assured with her modeling success and enjoyed the independence it brought to her.

The other women writers are comparatively different in their presentations. Even they are competent writers yet, they do not possess aura and fauna of Amrita, Kamala, or Shobhaa De has spent early years in dire poverty. They have different social and cultural background as they belong to royal and higher class. The strictness of Jhamak's father increased her self-confidence. The support of Malala's father strengthened her objective.

The women writers have share the common style of drafting similes, which can attract our attention. 'The Revenue stamp' has certain striking ideas and similes, which attract our attention. She calls Imroz her "15 Aug." which is a novel thing. About her sixteenth birthday she writes,

"Like a thief, came "my sixteenth year, stealthy like a prowler in the night stealing through the open windows at the head of my bed.''

Kamala Das on the other end has a fresh language and her vocabulary is rich and ample. Her similes like,

"At night he was as if a chieftain who collected the taxes drew him from his vessel, simply without exhilaration.''

The other place she writes,

"The sun falls over the city gently like a silver of butler on a piece of toast.''

Shobhaa De in her stylish English presented certain similes and metaphor too, which are very impressive. In her prologue to Selective Memory: Stories from My Life, she writes, for woman, a book in progress is like a secret lover. She has to hide from her family, steal time to go back to dream about. At other place she writes,

"flowers became trademark, color coordinated and carefully picked to complement my wardrobe, campus life was a four year picnic exactly as my father had feared.''

Each women writer is influenced by the period of her era and socio- economic conditions. Every writer may be male or female cannot keep him/her away from the social evils of their period. In case of Amrita Pritam, she has the painful stories of partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. She has the religious background at her home as father is a preacher and wants her to write only patriotic and religious poems only. In her early collections of poems, this influence is visible.

After partition, she has written a memorable poem in sweet memory of Waris Shah. The poem narrates the pain of separation and is today a popular Punjabi song sung by people of Punjab. Her love for poet Sahir, her marriage at sixteen with Mr. Pritam Singh, their separation friendship with Imroz all have direct and indirect impact on her fiction and autobiography.

Similarly, Kamala narrates in her memoir background of her great Nalpat house and her childhood days. Das's memoir represents her pain for love, which she sought from her marital life. She has started her poetry writing from the age of nine under the family influence. She has sought pure love, which is misunderstood through her writings as vulgar and narsist.

Amrita Pritam and Kamala Das have been very sensitive to adverse and scandalous criticism. About critics Kamala has said with contempt,

"*They help to sell books they attack. Overall critics are ugly lot, full of venom and frustration, Poor things. They must use their fangs. For their own comfort, like cobras or Russell's vipers.''*

Similarly, Amrita, fed up with her critics, writes in her autobiography,

"*I have had to fight a lifelong battle with my contemporaries. Only now that I am constrained to write about i.e. appeal to them in the name of truth not to subtract anything or make*

excuse. My only wish is that those who have had nothing to do with me in life should have nothing to do with me after my death."

In the same rebellion spirit, Shobhaa De also in her memoir criticized her critics as cited by her about Shekher Kapoor,

"Miffed by my opinion of 'Bandit Queen' he chose to retaliate with a childish abusive piece, whose main thrust was aimed at my husband's Mercedes. It was Shekhar's contention that a woman who guides through life in such a car cannot know about the ground realities.''

She has given a fitting reply to her critics like Kamala and Amrita few years ago,

"Speak to me at your own risk and peril, I tell people look to me for reassurance. It is so much a part of my life. I does not think about it.''

Further, she writes about her readers' critical appreciation of her novel 'Socialite Evenings'

"*I didn't know this was how you saw me .I wasn't how I saw myself not in but reading the book, I now realize how clearly you saw through everything; the hollowness of my life.. . I appear like a pathetic figure about my life, but I also know that what you have written is the truth.''*

Nayantara Sahgal and Gayatri Devi have presented a picture of higher class through their autobiographies. Women of higher class have comparatively better treatment from society, but even then they are subordinates to males. As both belong to politics, most parts of their autobiographies cover political events, policies of Government, political personalities etc. Nayantara Sahgal describes mother's frequent visits to jails, mama and nana's involvement in politics, foreign visits, more particularly than her childhood days.

Gayatri Devi describes her royal childhood spent in Cooch Bihar, her love and courtship with Jai, and politics of her times. She recognizes herself asjai's wife rather than Ayesha.

The women writers under the study have revealed many a common and opposite attitudes of their approach. In case of 'My Story', it is the best- selling woman's autobiography in post-independence India. 'My Story' is a chronologically ordered, linear narrative written in a reality style. Over the years, kamala has proffered several contradictory accounts of the genesis of 'My Story'. She has presented herself as either too bohemian to care about revealing her sexual adventures and her periods of mental breakdown or, conversely, as the submissive wife following the dictates of her husband who was apparently more eager than herself to cash in on a spiced- up and heavily fictionalized account of her life.

Shobhaa De is one of the most popular writers among many contemporary Indo-English novelists. De has not only concentrated on the presentation of a strange and startling world marking the emergence of recent trends in the society but also shown her concern for the problems faced by cotemporary high society women. She has presented through her memoir

women's behavior, their thoughts and their responses in different situations from the main concern. She has a feminist perspective an essential aspect of her fiction. She writes candidly and scrupulously of her dislikes and painstaking sketches. Some interesting examples like the one when she found herself weeping at the Brussels airport or how she met her husband and married him after a week. A large part of this book is about her younger years, her thoughts and her family. The string that holds this book together is observations of diverse people and issues. An autobiography, as a genre form is not always creating interest to all like novel or poetry.

In the writings of Amrita Pritam, there are direct approaches of her socio-cultural experiences and personal sensitive responses, which she has referred in her memoir 'The Revenue Stamp'. The memoir is an intense experience of this truth. It is her reflective journey down her full and creative life. She was caring only for her instinct, for telling the truth and yet was trying to use her creativity as a disguise in writing fiction. Her focus is only on the conceptual than the factual. She has been committed to the truth of self and has attempted to link the world around through her creativity. She has evolved her own vision from the personal to the universal suffering. She has not confined herself to any selected or singular set oriented by race, religion, class, gender or nation. She moves freely through all areas of conflict, broadening her vision to cover personal and social, conscious and unconscious, emotional and intellectual, national and cultural outlook she observes around her.

It is a common phenomenon in the country that women writing may be ordinal and creative but they are not given due credit which has actually observed in their personal lives.

These new women aspire for everything that gives them extreme power and equal footing with their male counterparts. They are ready to make every compromise as long as they can get to their desired goal. There is a strong sense of individualizing in them. These women are all out to compete and excel in almost every field which was previously men's territory. This 'new woman' of Shobhaa De, is ready to fight her way against all odds coming in her way in fulfilling her aspirations. She rebels against the existing moral codes and social norms which either in theory or in practice tends to relegate woman to a secondary position. Her happiness results in the breaking up of family and interpersonal relationships with the family. She develops such relationships where there is lack of trust and compatibility among the partners.

Thus, it is against the background of their personal experiences of life that the literary works of Kamala Das and Amrita Pritam must be viewed. Their literary journey is a continual exercise of self-revelation. At the same time, it is possible to place these writers in the tradition of women's writing in India. The autobiographical narratives of prominent personalities Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore and Nirad C. Chaudhuri - bring into limelight the essential characteristics of autobiography-writing in India. For the preponderance of religious and metaphysical values, the Indians in their autobiographies shun writing about their lives in isolation. The life-story is synthesized with a wider and deeper phenomenon-social, political, historical, spiritual and creative in nature.

The autobiographical impulse and act is central to woman's writing in India. The gamut of Indian women's writing generates an unending discourse on personalities, selves, woman's emotions and ways of life. In a way, it presents the socio-cultural scenario in India from a woman's standpoint. It affords a peep into Indian feminism too. Besides giving a historical perspective, it throws ample light on woman's psychic topography. It takes us to the deepest emotions of a woman's inner being. Love finds a spontaneous response in a woman's heart. She seeks her god in her love. The varied aspects of woman's personality find expression in the female autobiographical literature Like Walt Whitman, Kamala Das is pre-occupied with her own predicament in her writings. Her own sensibility finds repeated expression in her poetry, fiction, autobiography and prose writings. Like D.H. Lawrence, she has firm conviction in the validity of physical experience. Human beings are captive of their bodily desires. The only way to come out of the prison of the body is thorough satisfaction of one's sensuality. Physical union frees one from ego and earthly temptations, leading to a spiritual experience. There is, in fact, no body-soul dichotomy in Kamala Das. Amrita Pritam is a self-realized woman whom the prevalent customs and traditions could not deter from achieving her goal. The most attractive traits in her personality are her extraordinary courage and her unshakable conviction in truth. She met the adverse situations of her life with fortitude and emerged with greater phoenix-like strength.

Kamala Das' 'My Story' (1976) and Amrita Pritam's 'The Revenue Stamp' (1977) opened up new vistas for women writers. These autobiographies are marked by a ruthless dissection of intimate matters. Extra-marital affairs are discussed at length along with the freedom of the individual spirit. Kamala Das and Amrita Pritam retain their primal impulses. They have a deep abhorrence for all types of ostentation. Both claim to have established an honest and selfless relationship with their readers. They are intensely confessional writers. Their writings capture their individuality, points of view, and establish their distinctive personalities, reaching out to readers across all barriers of time and space.

We find that a deeper study of women's autobiographies unravel the hidden recesses of feminine psyche of Indian society. What so ever the position of women may be, behind every social stigma, there is woman, either in the role of mother-in-law, sister-in-law or wife. Most of the autobiographies reveal that fathers always encouraged the bold and broad outlook of their daughters. Especially in case of Shobhaa De and Nayantara Sahgal, father rejoiced the birth of a girl child. Most of the times father-in-laws turn out are father figure for daughter-in-laws. Woman herself should come out from the age old, customs, disbeliefs, and treat that newly entered woman in the home as her own sister. The women writers with sharp linguistic, cultural and geographical environment represented the problems and painful stories of Indian women from 19th century until date. However, they have not shared the contemporary time of the history, the problems of patriarchal society, treatment women, broken marriages and the identity crises for the women remained similar.

It is difficult to conclude a study of a contemporary and in many ways a controversial subject like feminist sensibility among women's autobiographies. It is always difficult to arrive at definite views or judgments. There are number of issues related with the study like this.

There is also a danger of omitting or misinterpreting or misrepresenting textual and referential material. Keeping in mind all aspects it is certain that no study is complete and perfect. There are pertinent questions related and raised by these women writers through their works. The issues like status of women in colonized situations, how does autobiography as a genre help them in expressing their sensibility? How do they mend and bend the form of autobiography to suit their purpose? Do their lives become texts for others or messages? What kind of self-identity do these writers construct and what are the voices that speak in the process of its definition? What is the consciousness that motivates them and guides them? In addition, the most important question of what are the conflicts that prevail in their lives between them and the society.

The women writers have through their autobiographies tackled these questions. What is significant is that no-two works are identical; no-two women report the same life, the same viewpoint or the same answers to these and other questions. Each of them has a significantly individual and valid viewpoint as well as world-view. The autobiographies studied are a mix fictionalized autobiographies and indirectly reported autobiographical reminiscences. The content, too, varies considerably between works revealing and connecting reconstruction of parts of individual lives.

As regarding, the narratives by the women writers Estelle, C Has her own views,

"Women's self- image is projected by the very means used to distance or detach themselves. In their life stories, a variety of forms of understatement in place of growing narratives, women tend to write in a straight forward and objective manner about both their girlhood and adult experiences.''

Amrita Pritam presents her image in her descriptions of childhood, girlhood and youth too metaphorically at many points, that her autobiography becomes an appealing example, distinct in expression and images use for language and aesthetic vision.

Kamala Das's 'My Story' gives us feelings of her identity of her inner urge for freedom, self-assertion, autonomy and establishment of her identity. She could not reconcile herself to a subordinate position in her life. Her husband could not satisfy her emotional needs and she had to seek compassions outside her marriage for her emotional needs. She has willfully turned to several men in the hope that she would one day be able to find an ideal lover who would love her for her own sake, who would not treat her as sexual object she has searched in her life for pure and unconditioned love.

Kamala Das was in dilemma over her marriage. She has realized that it was not love, but sex that marriage as an institution legalized. She was ready to defy subverting the traditional expectations from women. She felt that like men women too had the right to satisfy her needs. There is distinct similarity between Kamala Das's 'MY Story' and Silvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar' as both the creations are full of literary creativity like the protagonist of 'The Bell

Jar' Kamala Das was unable to exclude from her life the option which would fulfill her humanity in other than domestic circles.

Like Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das have been very sensitive to adverse criticism. About critics Kamala Das has said with the contempt

"*They help to sell books, they attack, on the whole critics are an ugly lit full of ransom and frustration. They must use their fans for their own confront like cobras a Russell's vipers.''*

Shobhaa De has provided brief and sensitive details of her family, particularly her father and narrated number of incidents of her life for example as a youngster, and she was a rebel and always did things against the normal traditional way. As she writes in her memoir,

"I must have created many problems for my parents as an adolescent. Journalists often asked me whether I was a rebel?''

As an editor, when she has made up her mind to depart with Nari Hira and to start Society. It was a challenging task for her as she has shared her experience in 'Selective Memories.' As she states in her memoir,

"The first thing to get right was the cover story, always the bane editors in search of the right subject .International reach on the matter had shown that woman sold better than men, photographs better than illustrations and babies best all.''

Further, she narrates her mental conflict of 'To Be or Not' with her magazine 'Society.' She narrates her story prior to publication of' Society. She was confused and admits,

"*while I was enjoying' society' editing enormously, one side of me was acting up,' listen you can do its own your own. Why work for somebody else? Goon, flout your own magazine. do it now.''*

The failure to run the magazine and the broken marriage disturbed her too much and her conscience her womanhood and at one point she thought about identity crisis of her life as she writes,

"I *had never been in such a situation before. Nothing, but nothing-was right financially or emotionally. My marriage was breaking up .The magazine I started 'celebrity', was facing all sorts of problems. For the first time in my adult life, I felt alone, alienated and isolated.''*

Her memoir has depicted her created status, her family, remarriage with De, her sisters, and children. When, she glances back to her life at fifty, her life she feels contented. She expresses satisfaction as an executive and mother of six children. She has a successful life to narrate and inspire other women of the country.

At the end of her memoir, she writes,

"*There* is *a sense of acceptance today that did not exist previously. This is who I am, no tricks, no games, no camouflage life is* going *on about*."

Do not conform to the established norms of the society; they defy them. They have revolted against the traditional man woman relationship. Their attitude to sex is different from the puritanical attitude of their contemporaries. They challenge all the taboos. They disapprove of the conventional marriage of girls at an early age and wide gap between husband and wife.

Malala's passion for education is avidly described in "I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban". At a point in time when the world increasingly faces the threats of extremism, religious intolerance and widespread violence, the book is an important read for the present generation, particularly for young students. When education should be a right for every young girl in the world, forces like the Taliban and Boko Haram stand against the idea of education for girls (western education to be specific), since in their world view, education will only corrupt young girls and alienate them from their true culture.

From a position of privilege, we tend to think of education as a basic and integral part of our lives. Going to school (without the threat of being gunned down) is extremely normal and routine; so much so that it becomes difficult to imagine the struggle that this young girl went through to gain education. It is an important realization for us, who occupy this privileged position that even today, in a time of globalization and proliferation of technology, simple access to education is a dream for people in some parts of the world.

In a world full of violence and extremism, Malala is a beacon of hope. Reading her story, one is convinced of this young lady's passion for knowledge, her bravery, struggles and the harsh circumstances she faced to realize her dream of 'going to school'. It is an inspiring journey that one can feel as one reads, reiterating the message that if a young girl can fight it out with a mighty force like the Taliban, there is still hope for this world.

Through their autobiographies these women writer's reflect their inner urge for freedom, self-assertion, autonomy and establishment of their identity. Incidentally, all the writers had a literary background. Similarly in case of Shobhaa De writing articles doing editing at a magazine was an occupation and hobby as a freelancer. Writing novels is a new experience for her, as she has not experimented with this form of writing. Similarly when she has made up her mind to write her memoir she was not sure about the accuracy and adoption of this memoir writing. Pawar has also experienced of writing articles and short- stories in Marathi journals when she was doing job at Ratnagiri in the Government job. She was under the influence of Dalit writers as well as Dr. Ambedkar's movement.

This comparative study of the women writers show not only their literary achievements and cultural periods of their time but also reveals simultaneously the social, economic and gender problems. One important factor is the broken marriage almost all the writers have faced in their lifetime. In case of Amrita Pritam after divorced from her husband, she stayed with Imroz for forty years of her life until her death. Kamala has not officially take divorced from

her husband but from the beginning of the memoir, repeatedly she mentioned her dissatisfaction and even confessed that she would be not loyal to him at least physically. She has narrated number of male characters who have played an important role to satisfy her needs at least mentally. It is her rebellion nature and urge for love, the never -ending hunger for a suitable partner who can care for her and understand her feelings. Her feminine sensibility is expressed through each chapter of 'My Story' from childhood days to her illnesses and the time she spent at Mumbai and Delhi with her husband. Pawar, Laxmibai and Shobhaa De, these women writers have also unhappy and troublesome marriage life. They could survive with the social custom of marriage. Due to their firmness, they could survive their family life. They have refused to bow down as ordinary homemakers against oppression and patriarchal orders.

These women writers have an important issue that is more than common. The spirit of secularism instilled in their writings. They spoke for and stood with strict discipline. They have proved themselves as secular in their approach to all the religions of the country.

Amrita has many Muslim friends. Kamala Das prior to her conversion to Muslim community has many Muslim friends. Laxmibai has proved more than any secular person has by adopting number of orphan children of different religion. Her conversion to Christianity and relations with the Missionaries indicate her true secular behavior and spirit. De, too, has maintained her secular character by detaching herself from any favor or bias feelings towards any group or community as a journalist and novelists. Urmila Pawar as Dalit writer never expressed any derogative remarks for the upper class people or use sarcastic language in her memoir.

Garding the portrayal of the characters all, the women writers have similar approach. Their characterization of their family members is free from bias feelings. They have depicted them with natural flavor. Amrita has drawn picture of her father, friends and other literary personalities Kamala Das has drawn pictures of entire Nalpat house from her great grandfather, granny, and even maid servants. She has portrayed Mr. Madhvdas her husband in a bad light. Her character sketches schoolmates and particularly her lovers. Carlo's depiction draws our attention. De has given a full basket of characterization of celebrity personalities along with her family members and specially her children. The celebrities she has portrayed in true color and in a bold manner without ant prejudice towards their position or role in the society. She has also taken care that she has not attack any one of them personally. It is very clear that as a feminist by heart she has little favor in the presenting of women characters may be Zeenat Amman or Hema Malini. She has done her job graciously as it is not easy to remember and to depict their characteristics objectively.

The methods these narrators have employed in order to expose the prevalent violent gender inequity within their community vary from inner monologues to attempts to establish a dialogue with the mother. One may learn from the present literary representations of violence that the process of transforming silence into a voiced discourse does not follow a direct trajectory. More precisely, the majority of the female victims first translate their feelings

related to the abuse into thoughts, and only then they struggle to exteriorize their thoughts by means of spoken language. Nevertheless, as one may notice in the section on child sexual abuse, one of the victims (Nisha) fails to accomplish the second phase of the process. According to the text, it is obvious that the young protagonist involuntarily remembers the abuse but she fails to communicate her thoughts to the others; what should be remarked, however, is the fact that Nisha exteriorizes her anxiety but only via body language – her visible distress or the sleeping and eating disorders. In this situation, it seems that the victim lacks a supportive listener – willing to decode the body language - in order to voice her anxiety and thoughts.

The feminine sensibility arising in the depiction of these memoirs is remarkable, presenting Indian ethos, values, and cultural background. They have also contributed through their life style the voice of the lower middle class women and the important question of search for own identity. In short, the researcher observes the elements of feminist sensibility in these memoirs

All the women writers have common family problems and circumstances but they could project Indian culture, its meaning and values. They have their limitations but the lamps of feminism they have lightens that has provided many women organizations to undertake the issues of poor, weaker and orphan women of the society. Their fight against patriarchal society, strong confession and rituals they could bring to the notice of the people for a change. This may be considered that the attempts in various methods they have employed in eradicating the evil mind of the people will defiantly change our society.

Autobiography offers women a chance to view themselves as individuals in the surrounding social ethos and to explore those private lives as woman. At the same time, the writer's position is multi-faceted in autobiography. It is normal for an autobiographer to re-organize the vision of life from all perspective as aesthetic, social cultural or religion.

For woman writers the act of writing autobiography carries a dark burden on the one hand, they have to maintain the aesthetic interest and the subjective shades of self on the other. They cannot ignore that socio-cultural ethos which has been very source of their conflicts and sufferings. As a writer, Amrita Pritam was disturbed to observe the religious riots at the time of partition and afterwards the political upheavals due to it,

"At the line of partition all social, political and religious values came crashing down lives glass smarted those crushed pieces of glass bruised my soul. I wrote my hymns for the sufferers of those who have abandoned and raped. The passion of those monstrous times has been with me since, like some consuming fire."

The noted, philosopher Bernard Russell expresses about theory of success of marriage. In his words,

"Marriage is for a woman the commonest mode of livelihood and the total amount of undesired sex endured by woman is greater in marriage than in prostitution."

The outcry of the west has changed the mindset of Indian women. They are demanding their rights, challenging male dominance, are working and are aware of their rights. They express their rage through their writing. A number of autobiographies written by women were published in 19th century. In India women's identity is defined either by the community in which she is born, or by the status of the husband of the woman. Indian society is patriarchal. In 20th century a set of women writers came up exposing extra ordinary intellectual and dashing women like Mirnal Pandey, Dalip Tiwana, Kiran Bedi, Suniti Devi, Vijay Laxmi Pandit, Krishna Hutseesing etc. Most of the autobiographies speak either of family or religion or politics of the time but the autobiographies in the later part of the 20th century by Amrita Pritam (The revenue stamp), Kamala Das (My Story), Shobhaa De (Selective Memory), Nayantara Sehgal (Prison and Chocolate Cake, From Fear Set Free) boldly expressed the social inhibitions and cultural taboos laid down by the society. They have a tone of truth and fidelity. In these autobiographies the writer has to establish the portrait of self in the public eye.

Women writers across the world have used memoirs, rather than the grand narratives of autobiography, to express their lived reality. In fact, some view the genre as a 'female gendered act that exposes the duplicity of patriarchy and the sub-human, subaltern status accorded to women in male dominated societies. It is a journey of emotions covered with literary expressions. Each women writer is influenced by the period of her era and socio-cultural conditions. Every writer may be male or female cannot keep him/her away from the social evils of their period. Women's life -stories can be summed up in the following lines:

"When I die

Do not throw the meat and bones away

But pile them up

And

Let them tell

By their smell What life was worth On this earth

What love was worth

In the end.."

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About the Author

Dr.Rajni Sharma *is an Associate Professor of English. Presently, she is teaching in Government Girls' College, Sriganganagar. She writes poems in Hindi and English. She has got many research papers in her credit in both renowned National and International journals. With 25 years of experience in teaching, she has been honoured by many institutions at local level.*

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